

THE

(5.)

Double-Dealer.

A

COMEDY.

Interdum tamen, & vocem Comædia tollit.

Hor. Ar. Po.

*Huic equidem Consilio palmam do : hic me magnifice ef-
fero, qui vim tantam in me & potestatem habeam
tantæ astutiæ, vera dicendo ut eos ambos fallam.*

Syr. in Terent. Heaut.

Written by Mr. William Congreve.



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Dramatis Personæ.

M E N.

Maskwell, A Villain; pretended Friend to *Mellefont*, Gallant to Lady *Touchwood*, and in Love with *Cynthia*.

Lord Touchwood, Uncle to *Mellefont*.

Mellefont, promised to, and in Love with *Cynthia*.

Careless, his Friend.

Lord Froth, A solemn Coxcomb.

Briisk, A pert Coxcomb.

Sir Paul Plyant, An uxorious, foolish, old Knight;
Brother to Lady *Touchwood*, and father to *Cynthia*.

W O M E N.

Lady *Touchwood*, in Love with *Mellefont*.

Cynthia, Daughter to Sir *Paul* by a former Wife, promised to *Mellefont*.

Lady *Froth*, a great Coquet; Pretender to Poetry, Wit, and Learning.

Lady *Plyant*, insolent to her Husband, and easy to any Pretender.

Chaplain, *Boy*, *Footmen*, and *Attendants*.

The SCENE, a Gallery in the Lord *Touchwood*'s House, with Chambers adjoining.

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ACT I. SCENE I.

A Gallery in the Lord Touchwood's House, with Chambers adjoining.

Enter Careless crossing the Stage, with his Hat, Gloves, and Sword in his Hands, as just risen from Table: Mellefont following him.

MELLEFONT.

NED, Ned, whither so fast? What, turn'd Fincher! Why, you wo'not leave us?

Care. Where are the Women? I'm weary of guzzling, and begin to think them the better Company.

Mel. Then thy Reason staggers, and thou'rt almost drunk.

Care. No Faith, but your Fools grow noisier — and if a Man must endure the Noise of Words without Sense, I think the women have more musical Voices, and become Nonsense better.

Mel. Why, they are at the end of the Gallery, retir'd to their Tea, and Scandal; according to their ancient Custom after Dinner. — But I made a Pretence to follow you, because I had something to say to you in private, and I am not like to have many Opportunities this Evening.

Care. And here's this Coxcomb most critically come to interrupt you.

SCENE II.

(To them) Brisk.

Brisk. Boys, Boys, Lads, where are you? What, do you give ground? Mortgage for a Bottle, ha? **Careless**.

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less, this is your Trick ; you're always spoiling Company by leaving it.

Care. And thou art always spoiling Company by coming into't.

Brisk. Pooh, ha, ha, ha, I know you envy me. Spite. Proud Spite, by the Gods ! and burning Envy — I'll be judg'd by *Mellefont* here, who gives and takes Rallery better than you or I. Pshaw, Man, when I say you spoil Company by leaving it, I mean you leave no body for the Company to laugh at. I think there I was with you ha ? *Mellefont*.

Mel. O! my Word, *Brisk*, that was a home Thrust; you have silenc'd him.

Brisk. Oh, my dear *Mellefont*, let me perish if thou art not the Soul of Conversation, the very Essence of Wit and Spirit of Wine — The Duce take me if there were three good Things said, or one understood, since thy Amputation from the Body of our Society. — He ! I think that's pretty metaphorical enough : I 'Gad I could not have said it out of thy Company — *Careless*, ha ?

Care. Hum, ay, what is't ?

Brisk. O, *Mon Cœur* ! what is't ! Nay, gad I'll punish you for want of Apprehension : The Duce take me if I tell you.

Mel. No, no, hang him, he has no Taste, — But, dear *Brisk*, excuse me, I have a little Business.

Care. Pr'ythee get thee gone ; thou see'st we are serious.

Mel. We'll come immediately if you'll but go in, and keep up good Humour and Sense in the Company : Pr'ythee do, they'll fall asleep else.

Brisk. I 'gad so they will — Well I will, I will gad you shall command me from the *Zenith* to the *Nadir*. — But the Duce take me if I say a good thing till you come. — But pr'ythee, dear Rogue, make haste, pr'ythee make haste, I shall burst else — And yonder's your Uncle, my Lord *Touchwood*, swears he'll disinherit you, and Sir *Paul Plyant* threatens to disclaim you for a Son-in-law, and my Lord *Frith* won't dance at your Wedding to morrow ; nor the Duce take me, I won't write your Epithalamium — and see what a Condition you're like to be brought to. *Mel*.

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Mel. Well I'll speak but three Words, and follow you.

Briſk. Enough, enough; *Careleſs*, bring your Apprehenſion along with you.

S C E N E III.

Mellefont, Careleſs.

Care. Pert Coxcomb!

Mel. Faith 'tis a good-natur'd Coxcomb, and has very entertaining Follies——You muſt be more human to him; at this Juncture, it will do me Service.——I'll tell you, I would have Mirth continued this Day at any Rate; tho' Patience purchaſe Folly, and Attention be paid with Noiſe: There are Times when Senſe may be unreaſonable, as well as Truth. Pr'ythee do thou wear none to Day; but allow *Briſk* to have Wit, that thou may'ſt ſeem a Fool.

Care. Why, how now, why this extravagant Propoſition?

Mel. O, I would have no room for ſerious Deſign; for I am jealous of a Plot. I would have Noiſe and Impertinence keep my Lady *Touchwood*'s Head from working: For Hell is not more buſy than her Brain, nor contains more Devils than her Imaginations.

Care. I thought your fear of her had been over——Is not to-morrow appointed for your Marriage with *Cynthia*, and her Father, Sir *Paul Plyant*, come to ſettle the Writings this Day on purpoſe?

Mel. True; but you ſhall judge whether I have not Reaſon to be alarm'd. None beſides you, and *Maſkiwell*, are acquainted with the Secret of my Aunt *Touchwood*'s violent Paſſion for me.

Since my firſt Refuſal of her Addreſſes, ſhe has endeavour'd to do me all ill Offices with my Uncle; yet ſhe has manag'd 'em with that Subtilty, that to him they have born the Face of Kindneſs; while her Malice, like a dark Lanthorn, only ſhone upon me, where it was directed. Still it gave me leſs Perplexity to prevent the Succeſs of her Diſpleaſure, than to avoid the Impertinencies of her Love; and of two Evils, I thought my ſelf favour'd in her Averſion: But whether urg'd by her Deſpair, and the ſhort Proſpect of Time ſhe ſaw,

to accomplish her Designs ; whether the Hopes of Revenge, or of her Love, terminated in the View of this my Marriage with *Cynthia*, I know not ; but this Morning she surpriz'd me in my Bed——

Care. Was there ever such a Fury ! 'tis well Nature has not put it into her Sex's Power to ravish—— Well, bless us ! proceed. What follow'd ?

Mel. What at first amaz'd me ; for I look'd to have seen her in all the Transports of a slighted and revengeful Woman : But when I expected Thunder from her Voice, and Lightning in her Eyes, I saw her melted into Tears, and hush'd into a Sigh. It was long before either of us spoke ; Passion had ty'd her Tongue, and amazement mine—— In short the Consequence was thus, she omitted nothing that the most violent Love could urge, or tender Words express ; which when she saw had no effect, but still I pleaded Honour and Nearness of Blood to my Uncle, then came the Storm I fear'd at first : For starting from my Bed-side like a Fury, she flew to my Sword, and with much ado I prevented her doing me or herself a Mischief : Having disarm'd her, in a Gust of Passion she left me, and in a Resolution, confirm'd by a thousand Curses, not to close her Eyes, 'till they had seen my Ruin.

Care. Exquisite Woman ! But what the Devil, does she think thou hast no more Sense, than to get an Heir upon her Body to disinherit thyself : For, as I take it, this Settlement upon you, is with a Proviso, that your Uncle have no Children.

Mel. It is so. Well, the Service you are to do me will be a Pleasure to yourself ? I must get you to engage my Lady *Plyant* all this Evening, that my pious Aunt may not work her to her Interest. And if you chance to secure her to yourself, you may incline her to mine. She's handsome, and knows it ; is very silly, and thinks she has Sense, and has an old fond Husband.

Care. I confess a very fair Foundation, for a Lover to build upon.

Mel. For my Lord *Froth*, he and his Wife will be sufficiently taken up, with admiring one another, and *Briek's* Gallantry, as they call it. I'll observe my Uncle myself ; and *Jack Maskwell* has promised me, to watch

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my Aunt narrowly, and give me Notice upon any Suspicion. As for Sir *Paul*, my wife Father-in-law that is to be, my dear *Cynthia* has such a share in his fatherly Fondness, he would scarce make her a Moment uneasy, to have her happy hereafter.

Care. So, you have mann'd your Works: But I wish you may not have the weakest Guard, where the Enemy is strongest.

Mel. *Maskwell*, you mean; pr'ythee why should you suspect him?

Care. Faith I cannot help it, you know I never lik'd him; I am a little superstitious in Physiognomy.

Mel. He has Obligations of Gratitude to bind him to me; his Dependance upon my Uncle is thro' my Means.

Care. Upon your Aunt, you mean.

Mel. My Aunt.

Care. I'm mistaken if there be not a Familiarity between them you do not suspect: Notwithstanding her Passion for you.

Mel. Pooh, Pooh, nothing in the World but his Design to do me Service; and he endeavours to be well in her Esteem, that he may be able to effect it.

Care. Well, I shall be glad to be mistaken; but your Aunt's Aversion in her Revenge, cannot be any way so effectually shewn, as in bringing forth a Child to disinherit you. She is handsome and cunning, and naturally wanton. *Maskwell* is Flesh and Blood at best, and Opportunities between them are frequent. His Affection to you, you have confessed, is grounded upon his Interest; that you have transplanted; and should it take Root in my Lady; I don't see what you can expect from the Fruit.

Mel. I confess the Consequence is visible, were your Suspicions just.——But see, the Company is broke up, let's meet 'em.

S C E N E IV.

(To them) *Lord Touchwood*, *Lord Froth*, *Sir Paul Plyant*, and *Brisk*.

Lord Touchwood.

Out upon't, Nephew —— Leave your Father-in-law, and me, to maintain our Ground against young People.

Mel.

Mel. I beg your Lordship's Pardon——We were just returning.——

Sir P. Were you Son? Gadsbud much better as it is——Good, strange! I swear I am almost tipsie——t'other Bottle would have been too powerful for me,——as sure as can be it would.——We wanted your Company.——But *Mr. Brisk*——Where is he? I swear and vow, he's a most facetious Person——and the best Company——And, my Lord *Froth*, your Lordship is so merry a Man, he, he, he.

Lord Froth. O foy, *Sir Paul*, what do you mean? Merry! O barbarous! I'd as lieve you call'd me a Fool.

Sir P. Nay, I protest and vow now, 'tis true; when *Mr. Brisk* jokes, your Lordship's Laugh does so become you, he, he, he.

Lord Froth. Ridiculous! *Sir Paul*, you're strangely mistaken, I find Champagne is powerful. I assure you, *Sir Paul*, I laugh at no Body's Jest but my own, or a Lady's; I assure you, *Sir Paul*.

Brisk. How? how, my Lord? what, affront my Wit! Let me perish, do I never say any thing worthy to be laugh'd at.

Lord Froth. O foy, don't misapprehend me, I don't say so, for I often smile at your Conceptions. But there is nothing more unbecoming a Man of Quality than to laugh; 'tis such a vulgar Expression of the Passion! every Body can laugh. Then especially to laugh at the Jest of an inferiour Person, or when any Body else of the same Quality does not laugh with one; ridiculous! To be pleased with what pleases the Croud! Now when I laugh, I always laugh alone.

Brisk. I suppose that's because you laugh at your own Jest, I gad, ha ha, ha.

Lord Froth. He, he, I swear tho', your Rallery provokes me to a Smile.

Brisk. Ay, my Lord, its a Sign I hit you in the Teeth, if you shew 'em.

Lord Froth. He, he, he, I swear that's so very pretty, I can't forbear.

Care. I find a Quibble bears more sway in your Lordship's Face, than a Jest.

Lord Touch. *Sir Paul*, if you please we'll retire to the

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the Ladies, and drink a dish of Tea, to settle our Heads.

Sir *P.* With all my Heart. — Mr. *Brisk*, you'll come to us, — or call me when you joke, I'll be ready to laugh incontinently.

SCENE V.

Mellefont, Careless, Lord Froth, Brisk.

Mel. But does your Lordship never see Comedies?

Lord *Froth.* O yes, sometimes, — But I never laugh.

Mel. No?

Lord *Froth.* Oh, no, — Never laugh indeed, Sir.

Care. No! Why what d'ye go there for?

Lord *Froth.* To distinguish my self from the Commonalty, and mortify the Poets; the Fellows grow so conceited; when any of their foolish Wit prevails upon the Side-boxes. — I swear, he, he, he, I have often constrained my Inclinations to laugh, — to avoid giving them Encouragement.

Mel. You are cruel to your self, my Lord, as well as malicious to them.

Lord *Froth.* I confess I did myself some Violence at first, but now I think I have conquer'd it.

Brisk. Let me perish, my Lord, but there is something very particular in the Humour, 'tis true, it makes against Wit, and I'm sorry for some Friends of mine that write, but — I gad I love to be malicious. — Nay, Duce take me there's Wit in't too. — And Wit must be foil'd by Wit; cut a Diamond with a Diamond; no other way I 'gad.

Lord *Froth.* Oh, I thought you would not be long, before you found out the Wit.

Care. Wit! In what? Where the Devil's the Wit, in not laughing when a Man has a Mind to't?

Brisk. O Lord, why, can't you find it out? — Why there 'tis, in the not laughing — Don't you apprehend me? — My Lord, *Careless* is a very honest Fellow, but harkee, — you understand me, somewhat heavy, a little shallow, or so — Why I'll tell you now: Suppose now you come up to me — Nay, pr'ythee *Careless* be instructed. Suppose, as I was saying, you come up to me holding your Sides, and laughing.

laughing, as if you would—Well—I look grave, and ask the Cause of this immoderate Mirth—You laugh on still, and are not able to tell me—Still I look grave, not so much as smile.

Care. Smile, no, what the Devil should you smile at, when you suppose I can't tell you!

Brisk. Pshaw, pshaw, pr'ythee don't interrupt me.—But I tell you, you shall tell me—at last—But it shall be a great while first.

Care. Well, but pr'ythee don't let it be a great while, because I long to have it over.

Brisk. Well then, you tell me some good Jest, or very witty Thing, laughing all the while as if you were ready to die—and I hear it and look thus.—Would not you be disappointed?

Care. No; for if it were a witty Thing, I should not expect you to understand it.

Lord Froth. O foy, Mr. *Careless*, all the World allows Mr. *Brisk* to have Wit; my Wife says he has a great deal. I hope you think her a Judge.

Brisk. Pooh, my Lord, his Voice goes for nothing—I can't tell how to make him apprehend.—Take it t'other way. Suppose I say a witty thing to you.

Care. Then I shall be disappointed indeed.

Mel. Let him alone, *Brisk*, he is obstinately bent not to be instructed.

Brisk. I'm sorry for him, the Duce take me.

Mel. Shall we go to the Ladies, my Lord?

Lord Froth. With all my Heart, methinks we are a Solitude without 'em.

Mel. Or, what say you, to another Bottle of Champagne?

Lord Froth. O, for the Universe, not a Drop more I beseech you. Oh intemperate! I have a flushing in my Face already.

(*Takes out a Pocket-Glass, and looks in it.*)

Brisk. Let me see, let me see, my Lord, I broke my Glass that was in the Lid of my Snuff-box. Hum! Duce take me, I have encouraged a Pimple here too.

(*Takes the Glass and looks.*)

Lord Froth. Then you must mortify him with a Patch; my Wife shall supply you. Come, Gentlemen, *allons*, here is Company coming.

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SCENE VI.

Lady Touchwood, and Maskwell.

Lady Touchwood.

I'll hear no more——Y'are false and ungrateful ;
come, I know you false.

Mask. I have been frail, I confess, Madam, for
your Ladyship's Service.

Lady Touch. That I should trust a Man, whom I
had known betray his Friend !

Mask. What Friend have I betray'd ? or to whom ?

Lady Touch. Your fond Friend *Mellefont*, and to
me ; can you deny it ?

Mask. I do not.

Lady Touch. Have you not wrong'd my Lord, who
has been a Father to you in your wants, and given you
Being ? Have you not wrong'd him in the highest
Manner, in his bed ?

Mask. With your Ladyship's Help, and for your
Service, as I told you before. I can't deny that nei-
ther.——Any thing more, Madam ?

Lady Touch. More ! Audacious Villain. O, what's
more, is most my Shame,——Have you not disho-
nour'd me ?

Mask. No, that I deny ; for I never told in all my
Life ; So that Accusation's answer'd : on to the next.

Lady Touch. Death, do you dally with my Passion ? in-
solent Devil ! But have a care,——Provoke me not ;
for, by the eternal Fire, you shall not 'scape my Ven-
geance.——Calm Villain ! How unconcern'd he
stands, confessing Treachery, and Ingratitude ! Is there
a Vice more black !——O I have Excuses, thousands
for my Faults ; Fire in my Temper ; Passions in my
Soul, apt to every Provocation ; oppress'd at once
with Love, and with Despair. But a sedate, a think-
ing Villain whose black blood runs temperately bad,
what Excuse can clear ?

Mask. Will you be in Temper, Madam ? I would
not talk not to be heard. I have been (*She walks a-
bout disorder'd*) a very great Rogue for your sake, and
you reproach me with it ; I am ready to be a Rogue
still, to do you Service ; and you are flinging Con-
science and Honour in my Face, to rebate my Inclina-
tions.

tions. How am I to behave my self? You know I am your Creature, my Life and Fortune in your Power; to disoblige you, brings me certain Ruin. Allow it, I would betray you; I would not be a Traitor to my self: I don't pretend to Honesty, because you know I am a Rascal: But I would convince you, from the Necessity of my being firm to you.

Lady Touch. Necessity, Impudence! Can no Gratitude incline you, no Obligations touch you? Have not my Fortune, and my Person, been subjected to your Pleasure? Were you not in the Nature of a Servant, and have not I in effect made you Lord of all, of me, and of my Lord? Where is that humble Love, the Languishing, that Adoration, which once was paid me, and everlastingly engag'd?

Mask. Fix'd, rooted in my Heart, whence nothing can remove 'em, yet you——

Lady Touch. Yet, what yet?

Mask. Nay, misconceive me not, Madam, when I say I have had a generous and a faithful Passion, which you had never favour'd; but thro' Revenge and Policy.

Lady Touch. Ha!

Mask. Look you, Madam, we are alone,——Pray contain yourself, and hear me. You know you lov'd your Nephew, when I first sigh'd for you; I quickly found it; an Argument that I lov'd; for with that Art, you veil'd your Passion, 'twas imperceptible to all but jealous Eyes. This Discovery made me bold; I confess it; for by it, I thought you in my Power. Your Nephew's Scorn of you, added to my Hopes; I watch'd the Occasion, and took you, just repulsed by him, warm at once with Love and Indignation; your Disposition, my Arguments, and happy Opportunity accomplish'd my Design; I prest the yielding Minute and was blest. How I have lov'd you since, Words have not shewn, then how shou'd Words express?

Lady Touch. Well, mollifying Devil!—And have I not met your Love with forward Fire?

Mask. Your Zeal I grant was ardent, but misplac'd there was Revenge in view; that Woman's Idol has defil'd the Temple of the God, and Love was made Mock-worship.——A Son and Heir would have edg'd your

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young *Mellefont* upon the Brink of Ruin, and left him none but you to catch at for Prevention.

Lady Touch. Again provoke me ! Do you wind me like a Larum, only to rouse my own still'd Soul for your Diversion ? Confusion !

Mask. Nay Madam, I'm gone, if you relapse, — What needs this ? I say nothing but what you yourself, in open Hours of Love, have told me. Why should you deny it ? Nay, how can you deny it ? Is not all this present Heat owing to the same Fire ? Do you not love him still ? How have I this Day offended you, but in not breaking off this Match with *Cynthia* ? Which e're to morrow shall be done, — had you but Patience.

Lady Touch. How, what said you, *Maskwell*, — Another Caprice to unwind my Temper ?

Mask. By Heav'n, no ; I am your Slave, the Slave of all your Pleasures ; and will not rest 'till I have giv'n you Peace, would you suffer me.

Lady Touch. O *Maskwell*, in vain do I disguise me from thee, thou know'st me, know'st the very inmost Windings and Recesses of my Soul. — Oh *Mellefont* ! I burn ; married to-morrow ! Despair strikes me. Yet my Soul knows I hate him too : Let him but once be mine, and next immediate Ruin seize him.

Mask. Compose yourself, you shall possess and ruin him too, — Will that please you ?

Lady Touch. How, how ? Thou dear, thou precious Villain, how ?

Mask. You have already been tampering with my Lady *Plyant*.

Lady Touch. I have : She is ready for any Impression I think fit.

Mask. She must be thoroughly persuaded, that *Mellefont* loves her.

Lady Touch. She is so credulous that way naturally, and likes him so well, that she will believe it faster than I can persuade her. But I don't see what you can propose from such a trifling Design ; for her first conversing with *Mellefont*, will convince her of the Contrary.

Mask. I know it. — I don't depend upon it. —

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But it will prepare something else; and gain us Leisure to lay a stronger Plot: If I gain a little Time, I shall not want Contrivance.

*One Minute, gives Invention to destroy,
What, to rebuild, will a whole Age employ.*

ACT II. SCENE I.

Lady Froth and Cynthia.

Cynthia.

INDEED, Madam! Is it possible your Ladyship could have been so much in Love?

Lady Froth. I could not sleep one Wink for three Weeks together.

Cyn. Prodigious! I wonder, want of Sleep, and so much Love, and so much Wit as your Ladyship has, did not turn your Brain.

Lady Froth. O my dear *Cynthia*, you must not rally your Friend, — But really, as you say, I wonder too, — But then I had a way — For between you and I, I had Whimsies and Vapours, but I gave them Vent.

Cyn. How pray, Madam?

Lady Froth. O I writ, writ abundantly, — Do you never write?

Cyn. Write, what?

Lady Froth. Songs, Elegies, Satires, Encomiums, Panegyricks, Lampoons, Plays, or Heroick Poems.

Cyn. O Lord, not I, Madam; I'm content to be a courteous Reader.

Lady Froth. O inconsistent! In Love, and not write! If my Lord and I had been both of your Temper, we had never come together — O blefs me! what a sad Thing would that have been, if my Lord and I should never met!

Cyn. Then neither my Lord nor you would ever have met with your Match, on my Conscience.

Lady Froth. O' my Conscience no more we should; thou say'lt right — for sure my Lord *Froth* is as fine a Gentleman, and as much a Man of Quality! Ah! nothing at all of the common Air, — I think I may say he wants nothing, but a blue Ribbon and a Star,

to make him shine the very Phosphorus of our Hemisphere. Do you understand those two hard Words? If you don't I'll explain them to you.

Cyn. Yes, yes, Madam, I'm not so ignorant. — At least I won't own it, to be troubled with your Instructions. (*Aside.*)

Lady Froth. Nay, I beg your Pardon; but being derived from the *Greek*, I thought you might have escap'd the Etymology, — But I'm the more amaz'd to find you a Woman of Letters, and not write! Bless me! how can *Mellefont* believe you love him?

Cyn. Why 'Faith, Madam, he that won't take my Word, shall never have it under my Hand.

Lady Froth. I vow *Mellefont's* a pretty Gentleman, but methinks he wants a Manner.

Cyn. A Manner! what's that, Madam?

Lady Froth. Some distinguishing Quality, as for example, the *bel air* or *Brillant* of Mr. *Brisk*; the Solemnity, yet Complaisance of my Lord, or something of his own that should look a little *Je-ne-sçay-quoy*; he is too much a Mediocrity, in my Mind.

Cyn. He does not indeed affect either Pertness or Formality; for which I like him: Here he comes.

Lady Froth. And my Lord with him: pray observe the Difference.

S C E N E II.

(*To them.*) *Lord Froth, Mellefont and Brisk.*

Cyn. Impertinent Creature! I could almost be angry with her now. (*Aside.*)

Lady Froth. My Lord, I have been telling *Cynthia*, how much I have been in love with you; I swear I have; I'm not ashamed to own it now; Ah! it makes my Heart leap, I vow, I sigh when I think on't: My dear Lord! Ha, ha, ha, do you remember, my Lord?

(*Squeezes him by the Hand, looks kindly on him, sighs and then laughs out.*)

Lord Froth. Pleasant Creature! perfectly well: ah! that look, ay, there it is; who could resist! 'twas so my Heart was made a Captive first, and ever since 't has been in love with happy Slavery.

Lady Froth. O that Tongue, that dear deceitful Tongue! that charming Softness in your Mien and your

your Expression, and then your Bow! Good my Lord, bow as you did when I gave you my Picture; here, suppose this my Picture——(*Gives him a Pocket-Glass.*) Pray mind my Lord; ah! he bows charmingly; nay, my Lord, you shan't kiss it so much; I shall grow so jealous, I vow now.

(*He bows profoundly low, then kisses the Glass.*)

Lord Froth. I saw myself there, and kiss'd it for your sake.

Lady Froth. Ah! Gallantry to the last Degree——
Mr. Brisk, you're a Judge; was ever any Thing so well bred as my Lord?

Brisk. Never any thing; but your Ladyship, let me perish.

Lady Froth. O prettily turn'd again; let me die but you have a great deal of Wit. Mr. Mellefont, don't you think Mr. Brisk has a World of Wit?

Mel. O, yes, Madam.

Brisk. O dear, Madam——

Lady Froth. An infinite deal!

Brisk. O Heavens! Madam——

Lady Froth. More Wit than any Body.

Brisk. I'm everlastingly your humble Servant, Duce take me, Madam.

Lord Froth. Don't you think us a happy Couple?

Cyn. I vow, my Lord, I think you the happiest Couple in the World; for you're not only happy in one another, and when you are together, but happy in your selves, and by your selves.

Lord Froth. I hope Mellefont will make a good Husband too.

Cyn. 'Tis my Interest to believe he will, my Lord.

Lord Froth. D'ye think he'll love you as well as I do my Wife? I'm afraid not.

Cyn. I believe he'll love me better.

Lord Froth. Heav'ns! that can never be; but why do you think so?

Cyn. Because he has not so much Reason to be fond of himself.

Lord Froth. O your humble Servant for that, dear Madam; well Mellefont you'll be a happy Creature.

Mel. Ay, my Lord, I shall have the same Reason for

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for my Happiness that your Ladyship has, I shall think my self happy.

Lord Froth. Ah, that's all.

Brisk. (To Lady Froth.) Your Ladyship is in the right; but I'gad I'm wholly turn'd into Satire. I confess I write but seldom, but when I do — keen Iambicks, I'gad. But my Lord was telling me, your Ladyship has made an Essay towards an heroick Poem.

Lady Froth. Did my Lord tell you? Yes I vow, and the Subject is my Lord's Love to me. And what do you think I call it? I dare swear you won't guess — *The Syllabub*, ha, ha, ha.

Brisk. Because my Lord's Title's *Froth*, I'gad, ha, ha, ha, Duce take me very *a Propos* and surprizing, ha, ha, ha.

Lady Froth. He, ay, is not it? — And then I call my Lord *Spumoso*; and my self, what d'ye think I call myself?

Brisk. *Laßilla*, may be; — gad I cannot tell.

Lady Froth. Biddy that's all; just my own Name.

Brisk. Biddy! I'gad very pretty — Duce take me if your Ladyship has not the Art of surprizing the most naturally in the World — I hope you'll make me happy in communicating the Poem.

Lady Froth. O, you must be my Confident, I must ask your Advice.

Brisk. I'm your humble Servant, let me perish — I presume your Ladyship has read *Bossu*?

Lady Froth. O yes, and *Rapine*, and *Dacier*, upon *Aristotle* and *Horace*. — My Lord, you must not be jealous, I'm communicating all to Mr. *Brisk*.

Lord Froth. No, no, I'll allow Mr. *Brisk*; have you nothing about you to shew him, my Dear?

Lady Froth. Yes, I believe I have. — Mr. *Brisk*, come, will you go into the next Room? and there I'll shew you what I have.

Lord Froth. I'll walk a Turn in the Garden, and come to you.

SCENE III.

Mellefont, Cynthia.

Mei. You're thoughtful, *Cynthia*?

Cyn. I'm thinking, tho' Marriage Makes Man and Wife

Wife one Fleſh, it leaves 'em ſtill two Fools; and they become more conſpicious, by ſetting off one another.

Mel. That's only when two Fools meet, and their Follies oppoſed.

Cyn. Nay, I have known when two Wits meet, by the Oppoſition of their Wit, render themſelves as ridiculous as Fools. 'Tis an odd Game we are going to play at: What think you of drawing Stakes, and a giving over in Time?

Mel. No, hang't that's not endeavouring to win, becauſe it's poſſible we may loſe; ſince we have ſhuffled and cut, let's e'en turn up Trump now.

Cyn. Then I find it's like Cards, if either of us have a good Hand 'tis an accident of Fortune.

Mel. No, Marriage is rather like a Game at Bowls, Fortune indeed makes the Match, and the two neareſt, and ſometimes the two fartheſt are together, but the Game depends intirely upon Judgment.

Cyn. Still it is a Game, and conſequently one of us muſt be a Loſer.

Mel. Not at all; only a friendly Trial of Skill, and the Winnings to be laid out in an Entertainment.— what's here, the Muſick?—Oh, my Lord has promiſed the Company a new Song, we'll get 'em to give it us by the way. (*Muſicians croſſing the Stage.*) Pray let us have the Favour of you, to praſiſe the Song, before the Company hear it.

S O N G.

I.

CYNTHIA frowns when e'er I woe her,
Yet ſhe's wext if I give over;
Much ſhe fears I ſhould undo her,
But much more to loſe her Lover:
Thus, in doubting, ſhe refuſes;
And not winning, thus ſhe loſes.

II.

Pr'ythee Cynthia look behind you,
Age and Wrinkles will o'ertake you,
Then too late Deſire will find you,
When the Power muſt forſake you:

Think,

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*Think, O think o' th' sad Condition,
To be past, yet wish Fruition.*

Mel. You shall have my thanks below.

(To the Musick, they go out.)

SCENE IV.

(To them.) Sir Paul Plyant and Lady Plyant.

Sir P. Gads but! I am provok'd into a Fermentation, as my Lady *Froth* says; was ever the like read of in Story?

Lady P. Sir *Paul* have Patience, let me alone to rattle him up.

Sir P. Pray your Ladyship give me leave to be angry—I'll rattle him up I warrant you, I'll firk him with a *Certiorari*.

Lady P. You firk him! I'll firk him myself? pray Sir *Paul* hold you contented.

Cyn. Bleis me, what makes my Father in such a Passion!—I never saw him thus before.

Sir P. Hold yourself contented, my Lady *Plyant*,—I find Passion coming upon me by Inflation, and I cannot submit as formerly, therefore give way.

Lady P. How now! will you be pleased to retire, and——

Sir P. No marry will I not be pleased, I am pleased to be angry, that's my Pleasure at this time.

Mel. What can this mean!

Lady P. Gads my Life, the Man's distracted; why how now, who are you? What am I? Slidikins, can't I govern you? What did I marry you for? Am I not to be absolute and uncontrolable? Is it fit a Woman of my Spirit, and Conduct, should be contradicted in a Matter of this Concern?

Sir P. It concerns me, and only me——Besides, I'm not to be govern'd at all Times. When I am in Tranquility, my Lady *Plyant* shall command Sir *Paul*; but when I am provok'd to Fury, I cannot incorporate with Patience and Reason,—as soon may Tygers match with Tygers, Lambs with Lambs, and every Creature couple with its Foe, as the Poet says.—

Lady P. He's hot-headed still! 'Tis in vain to talk to you; but remember I have a Curtain-Lecture for you, you disobedient, headstrong Brute. Sir

Think,

Sir P. No, 'tis because I won't be a Brute, and have my Head fortify'd, that I am thus exasperated, —But I will protect my Honour, and yonder is the Violater of my Fame.

Lady P. 'Tis my Honour that is concern'd, and the Violation was intended to me! Your Honour! You have none but what is in my keeping, and I can dispose of it when I please—therefore don't provoke me.

Sir P. Hum, gads-bud she says true—Well, my Lady, march on, I will fight under you then: I am convinc'd, as far as Passion will permit.

(*Lady Plyant and Sir Paul come up to Mellefont.*)

Lady P. Inhumane and treacherous—

Sir P. Thou Serpent and first Tempter of Woman-kind.——

Cyn. Bless me! Sir; Madam; what mean you?

Sir P. *Thy, Thy*, come away *Thy*, touch him not, come hither Girl, go not near him, there's nothing but Deceit about him; Snakes are in his Peruke, and the Crocodile of *Nilus* is in his Belly, he will eat thee up alive.

Lady P. Dishonourable, impudent Creature!

Mel. For Heav'n's sake, Madam, to whom do you direct this Language!

Lady P. Have I been myself with all the Decorum and Nicety, befitting the Person of Sir Paul's Wife; Have I preserv'd my Honour as it were in a Snow-house for these three Years past? Have I been white and unfully'd even by Sir Paul himself;

Sir P. Nay, she has been an invincible Wife, even to me, that's the Truth on't.

Lady P. Have I, I say, preserv'd myself, like a fair Sheet of Paper, for you to make a Blot upon?——

Sir P. And she shall make a Simile with any Woman in *England*.

Mel. I am so amaz'd, I know not what to say.

Sir P. Do you think my Daughter, this pretty Creature! gads-bud she's a Wife for a Cherubin! Do you think her fit for nothing but to be a stalking Horse, to stand before you, while you take aim at my Wife? gads-bud I was never angry before in my Life, and I'll never be appeas'd again.

Mel. Hell and Damnation! This is my Aunt; such

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such Malice can be engendred no where else. (*Aside.*

Lady P. Sir Paul, take *Cynthia* from his Sight; leave me to strike him with the Remorse of his intended Crime.

Cyn. Pray, Sir, stay, hear him, I dare affirm he's innocent.

Sir P. Innocent! Why hark'ye, come hither *Thy*, hark'ye, I had it from his Aunt, my Sister *Touchwood*. —gads-but he does not care a Farthing for any thing of thee, but thy Portion, why he's in love with my Wife; he would have tantaliz'd thee, and made a Cuckold of thy poor Father, —and that would certainly have broke my Heart — I'm sure if ever I should have Horns, they would kill me; they would never come kindly, I should die of 'em, like a Child that was cutting his Teeth — I should indeed, *Thy* —therefore come away; but Providence has prevented all, therefore come away when I bid you.

Cyn. I must obey.

SCENE V.

Lady Plyant, Mellefont.

Lady P. O, such a thing! the Impiety of it startles me —to wrong so good, so fair a Creature, and one that loves you tenderly — 'tis a Barbarity of Barbarities, and nothing could be guilty of it —

Mel. But the greatest Villain Imagination can form, I grant it; and next to the Villainy of such a Fact is the Villainy of aspersing me with the Guilt. How? which way was I to wrong her? For yet I understand you not.

Lady P. Why, gads my Life, Cousin Mellefont, you cannot be so peremptory as to deny it; when I tax you with it to your Face; for now Sir Paul's gone, you are *Corum Nobis*.

Mel. By Heav'n, I love her more than Life, or —

Lady P. Fiddle, faddle, don't tell me of this and that, and ev'ry Thing in the World, but give me Mathematicular Demonstration, answer me directly — But I have not Patience — Oh! the Impiety of it, as I was saying, and the unparell'd Wickedness! Merciful Father! How could you think to reverse Nature so, to make the Daughter the Means of procuring the Mother?

Mel. The Daughter to procure the Mother!

Lady P. Ay, for tho' I not am *Cynthia's* own Mother,

ther, I am her Father's Wife; and that's near enough to make it Incest.

Mel. Incest! O my precious Aunt, and the Devil in Conjunction. (*Afide.*)

Lady P. O reflect on the Horror of that, and then the Guilt of deceiving every Body; marrying the Daughter, only to make a Cuckold of the Father; and then seducing me, debauching my Purity, and perverting me from the Road of Virtue, in which I have trod thus long, and never made one Trip, not one *faux pas*; O consider it, what would you have to answer for if you should provoke me to Frailty? Alas! Humanity is feeble, Heav'n knows! very feeble, and unable to support itself.

Mel. Where am I? Is it Day? and am I awake? Madam——

Lady P. and no Body knows how Circumstances may happen together,——To my thinking, now I could resist the strongest Temptation,——But yet I know, 'tis impossible for me to know whether I could or not, there's no certainty in the Things of this Life.

Mel. Madam, pray give me leave to ask you one Question.——

Lady P. O Lord, ask me the Question! I'll swear I'll refuse it; I swear I'll deny it——therefore don't ask me, nay you shan't ask me, I swear I'll deny it. O Gemini, you have brought all the Blood into my Face; I warrant I am as red as a Turkey-Cock; O fie, Cousin *Mellefont*!

Mel. Nay; Madam, hear me; I mean——

Lady P. Hear you? no, no; I'll deny you first, and hear you afterward. For one does not know how one's Mind may change upon hearing——Hearing is one of the Senses, and all the Senses are fallible; I won't trust my Honour, I assure you; my Honour is infallible and uncomatible.

Mel. For Heav'n's sake, Madam.

Lady P. O name it no more——Bless me, how can you talk of Heav'n! and have so much Wickedness in your Heart? May be you don't think it a Sin——They say some of you Gentlemen don't think it a Sin——May be it is no Sin to them that don't think it so; indeed if I did not think it a Sin——But still my Honour, if it were no Sin,——But then, to marry my

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my Daughter, for the Conveniency of frequent Opportunities,——I'll never consent to that, as sure as can be, I'll break the Match.

Mel. Death and Amazement, —— Madam, upon my Knees——

Lady P. Nay, nay, rise up, come you shall see my good Nature. I know Love is powerful, and noBody can help his Passion: Tis not your Fault; nor I swear it is not mine.——How can I help it, if I have Charms? And how can you help it if you are made a Captive? I swear it is Pity it should be a Fault,——But my Honour,——well, but your Honour too——but the Sin! ——well but the Necessity——O Lord, here's some Body coming. I dare not stay. Well, you must consider of your Crime, and strive as much as can be against it, strive be sure —— But don't be melancholick, don't despair,——But never think that I'll grant you any thing; O Lord, no; —— But be sure you lay aside all Thoughts of the Marriage, for tho' I know you don't love *Cynthia*, only as a Blind for your Passion to me; yet it will make me jealous. ——O Lord, what did I say? Jealous! no no, I can't be jealous, for I must not love you, —— therefore don't hope,——But don't despair neither, O, they're coming I must fly.

SCENE VI.

Mellefont alone.

Mellefont (after a Pause.)

So then,——spight of my Care and Foresight, I am caught, caught in my Security, —— Yet this was but a shallow Artifice, unworthy of my Matchiavilian Aunt: There must be more behind, this is but the first Flash, the Priming of her Engine; Destruction follows hard, if not most presently prevented.

SCENE VII.

(To him Maskwell.)

Mell. Maskwell, welcome, thy Presence is a view of Land, appearing to my ship-wrac'k Hopes: The Witch has rais'd the Storm, and the Ministers have done their Work; you see the Vessels are parted.

Mask. I know it; I met Sir *Paul* towing away *Cynthia*: Come, trouble not your Head, I'll join you together

gether e're to morrow Morning, or drown between you in the Attempt.

Mell. There's Comfort in a Hand stretch'd out, to one that's sinking ; tho' ne'er so far off.

Mask. No sinking, nor no Danger, — Come, cheer up ; why you don't know, that while I plead for you, your Aunt has given me a retaining Fee ; — Nay, I am your greatest Enemy, and she does but Journey-work under me.

Mell. Ha ! How's this ?

Mask. What do you think of my being employ'd in the Execution of all her Plots ? Ha, ha, ha, by Heav'n its true, I have undertaken to make your Uncle disinheret you, to get you turn'd out of Doors ; and to — and to — Ha, ha, ha, I can't tell you for Laughing, — Oh she has open'd her Heart to me — I am to turn you a grazing, and to — Ha, ha, ha, marry *Cynthia* my self ; there's a Plot for you.

Mell. Ha, I see, I see my rising Sun ! Light breaks thro' Clouds upon me, and I shall live in Day — O my *Maskwell* ! How shall I thank or praise thee, thou hast out-witted Women. — But tell me, how could'st thou thus get into her Confidence ? — Ha ! How ? But was it her Contrivance to persuade my Lady *Plyant* to this extravagant Belief ?

Mask. It was, and to tell you the Truth, I encourag'd it for your Diversion : Tho' it made you a little uneasy for the present, yet the Reflection of it must be entertaining — I warrant she was very violent at first.

Mell. Ha, ha, ha, ay, ay, a very Fury ; but I was almost afraid of her Violence at last, — If you had not come as you did ; I don't know what she might have attempted.

Mask. Ha, ha, ha, I know her Temper. — Well you must know then, that all my Contrivance were but Bubbles ; 'till at last I pretended to have been long secretly in love with *Cynthia* ; that did my Business ; that convinc'd your Aunt, I might be trusted ; since it was as much my Interest as hers to break the Match : Then, she thought my Jealousy might qualify me to assist her in her Revenge. And in short

in that belief, told me the Secrets of her Heart. At length we made this Agreement, if I accomplish her Designs (as I told you before) she has engag'd to put *Cynthia* with all her Fortune into my Power.

Mel. She is most gracious in her Favour,——well, and dear *Jack*, how hast thou contrived?

Mask. I would not have you stay to hear it now; for I don't know, but she may come this Way; I am to meet her anon; after that, I'll tell you the whole Matter; be here in this Gallery an Hour hence, by that time I imagine our Consultation may be over.

Mell. I will; 'till then Success attend thee.

S C E N E VIII.

Maskwell alone.

Mask. Till then, Success will attend me; for when I meet you, I meet the only Obstacle to my Fortune. *Cynthia*, let thy Beauty gild my Crimes; and whatsoever I commit of Treachery! or Deceit shall be imputed to me as a Merit——Treachery! what Treachery? Love conceals all the Bonds of Friendship, and sets Men right upon their first Foundations.

Duty to Kings, Piety to Parents, Gratitude to Benefactors, and Fidelity to Friends, are different and particular Ties: But the Name of Rival cuts 'em all asunder, and is a general Acquittance——Rival is equal, and Love like Death an universal Leveller of Mankind. Ha! but is there not such a Thing as Honesty? Yes, and whosoever has it about him bears an Enemy in his Breast: For your Honest Man, as I take it, is that nice scrupulous conscientious Person who will cheat no body but himself, such another Coxcomb as your Wife Man, who is too hard for all the World, and will be made a Fool of by no body but himself: Ha, ha, ha. Well for Wisdom and Honesty, give me Cunning and Hypocrasie; oh, 'tis such a Pleasure to angle for fair fac'd Fools! then that hungary Gudgeon Credulity, will bite at any Thing——why, let me see, I have the same Face, the same Words and Accents when I spake what I do think; and when I spake what I do not think——the very same——and dear Dissimulation is the only Art not to be known from Nature.

C

Why

*Why will Mankind be Fools, and be deceiv'd?
And why are Friends and Lovers Oaths believ'd?
When, each, who searches strictly his own Mind,
May so much Fraud and Power of Baseness find.*

A C T III. S C E N E I.

Lord Touchwood, and Lady Touchwood.

Lady Touchwood.

MY Lord, can you blame my Brother *Plyant*, if he refuse his Daughter upon this Provocation? The Contract's void by this unheard of Impiety.

Lord Touch. I don't believe it true; he has better Principles—Pho, 'tis Nonsense. Come, come, I know my Lady *Plyant* has a large Eye, and wou'd centre every Thing in her own Circle; 'tis not the first time she has mistaken Respect for Love, and made Sir *Paul* jealous of the Civility of an undesigning Person, the better to bespeak his Security in her unfeigned Pleasures.

Lady Touch. You censure hardly, my Lord; my Sister's Honour is very well known.

Lord Touch. Yes, I believe I know some that have been familiarly acquainted with it. This is a little Trick wrought by some pitiful Contriver, envious of my Nephew's Merit.

Lady Touch. Nay, my Lord, it may be so, and I hope it will be found so; But that will require some time; for in such a Case as this, Demonstration is necessary.

Lord Touch. There should have been Demonstration of the contrary too, before it had been believ'd—

Lady Touch. So I suppose there was.

Lord Touch. How? Where? when?

Lady Touch. That I can't tell; nay I don't say there was—I am willing to believe as favourably of my Nephew as I can.

Lord Touch. I don't know that. [*Half aside.*]

Lady Touch. How? Don't you believe that, say you, my Lord?

Lord Touch. No, I don't say so—I confess I am troubled to find you so cold in his Defence.

Lady

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Lady Touch. His Defence! Bless me, wou'd you have me defend an ill Thing?

Lord Touch. You believe it then?

Lady Touch. I don't know; I am very unwilling to speak my Thoughts in any thing that may be to my Cousin's Disadvantage; besides I find, my Lord, you are prepar'd to receive an ill Impression from any Opinion of mine which is not consenting with your own: But since I am like to be suspected in the End, and 'tis a Pain any longer to dissemble, I own it to you; in short I do believe it, nay, and can believe any thing worse, if it were laid to his Charge—Don't ask me my Reasons, my Lord, for they are not fit to be told you.

Lord Touch. I'm amaz'd, here must be something more than ordinary in this. (*Aside.*) Not fit to be told me, Madam? You can have no Interests, wherein I am not concern'd, and consequently the same Reasons ought to be convincing to me, which create you Satisfaction or Disquiet.

Lady Touch. But those which cause my Disquiet, I am willing to have remote from your hearing. Good my Lord, don't press me.

Lord Touch. Don't oblige me to press you.

Lady Touch. Whatever it was, 'tis past: And that is better to be unknown which cannot be prevented; therefore let me beg you to rest satisfy'd—

Lord Touch. When you have told me, I will—

Lady Touch. You won't.

Lord Touch. By my Life, my Dear, I will.

Lady Touch. What if you can't.

Lord Touch. How? Then I must know, nay I will: No more trifling—I charge you tell me—By all our mutual Peace to come; upon your Duty—

Lady Touch. Nay, my Lord, you need say no more, to make me lay my Heart before you, but don't be thus transported; compose yourself: It is not of Concern, to make you lose one Minute's Temper. 'Tis not indeed, my Dear. Nay, by this Kiss you shan't be angry. O Lord, I wish I had not told you any thing—Indeed my Lord, you have frightened me, Nay, look pleas'd, I'll tell you.

Lord Touch. Well, well.

Lady Touch. Nay, but will you be calm——indeed it's nothing but——

Lord Touch. But what?

Lady Touch. But will you promise me not to be angry—Nay you must——Not to be angry with *Mellefont*——I dare swear he's sorry——and were it to do again, would not——

Lord Touch. Sorry, for what? Death, you rack me with Delay.

Lady Touch. Nay, no great Matter; only——Well I have your Promise,——Pho, why nothing only your Nephew had a mind to amuse himself sometimes with a little gallantry towards me. Nay, I can't think he meant any thing seriously, but methought it look'd oddly.

Lord Touch. Confusion and Hell, what do I hear?

Lady Touch. Or, may be, he thought he was not enough a-kin to me, upon your Account, and had a mind to create a nearer Relation on his own; a Lover, you know, my Lord——Ha, ha, ha. Well but that's all——Now you have it; well, remember your Promise, my Lord, and don't take any Notice of it to him.

Lord Touch. No, no, no——Damnation!

Lady Touch. Nay, I swear you must not——a little harmless Mirth——Only misplac'd, that's all——But if it were more, 'tis over now, and all's well. For my Part, I have forgot it; and so has he I hope, for I have not heard any thing from him these two Days.

Lord Touch. These two Days! Is it so fresh? Unnatural Villain! Death, I'll have him stripp'd and turn'd naked out of my Doors this Moment, and let him rot and perish, incestuous Brute!

Lady Touch. O for Heaven's Sake, my Lord, you'll ruin me, if you take such publick Notice of it, it will be a Town Talk: Consider your own and my Honour——nay, I told you, you would not be satisfied when you knew it.

Lord Touch. Before I've done, I will be satisfy'd. Ungrateful Monster! how long?

Lady Touch. Lord, I don't know: I wish my Lips had grown together when I told you——Almost a Twelvemonth——Nay, I won't tell you any more, 'till you are yourself. Pray, my Lord, don't let the Company

Company see you in this Disorder—Yet I confess, I can't blame you ; for I think I was never so surpriz'd in my Life—Who would have thought my Nephew could so have misconstrued my Kindness—But will you go into your Closet and recover your Temper ? I'll make and Excuse of sudden Business to the Company, and come to you. Pray, good dear my Lord, let me beg you do now : I'll come immediately, and tell you all ; will you, my Lord ?

Lord Touch. I will—I am mute with Wonder.

Lady Touch. Well, but go now, here's some Body coming.

Lord Touch. Well, I go—You won't stay, for I would hear more of this.

Lady Touch. I follow instantly—So.

S C E N E II.

Lady Touchwood, Maskwell.

Mask. This was a Master-piece, and did not need my Help—tho' I stood ready for a Cue to come in and confirm all, had there been Occasion.

Lady Touch. Have you seen Mellefont ?

Mask. I have ; and am to meet him here about this Time.

Lady Touch. How does he bear his Disappointment ?

Mask. Secure in my Assistance, he seem'd not much afflicted, but rather laugh'd at the shallow Artifice, which so little Time must of necessity discover. Yet he is apprehensive of some farther Design of yours, and has engaged me to watch you. I believe he will hardly be able to prevent your Plot, yet I would have you use Caution and Expedition.

Lady Touch. Expedition indeed ; for all we do, must be perform'd in the remaining Part of this Ev'ning, and before the Company break up ; least my Lord should cool, and have an Opportunity to talk with him privately—My Lord must not see him again.

Mask. By no means ; therefore you must aggravate my Lord's Displeasure to a Degree that will admit of no Conference with him.—What think you of mentioning me ?

Lady Touch. How ?

Mask. To my Lord, as having been privy to Mellefont's

lesfont's Design upon you, but still using my utmost Endeavours to dissuade him: Tho' my Friendship and Love to him has made me conceal it; yet you may say, I threatned the next time he attempted any thing of that kind, to discover it to my Lord.

Lady Touch. To what end is this?

Mask. It will confirm my Lord's Opinion of my Honour and Honesty, and create in him a new Confidence in me, which (should this Design miscarry) will be necessary to the forming another Plot that I have in my Head—To you, as well as the rest. *(Aside.)*

Lady Touch. I'll do it—I'll tell him you hindred him once from forcing me.

Mask. Excellent! Your Ladyship has a most improving Fancy. You had best go to my Lord, keep him as long as you can in his Closet, and I doubt not but you will mould him to what you please; your Guests are so engaged in their own Follies and Intrigues, they'll miss neither of you.

Lady Touch. When shall we meet;—At eight this Evening in my Chamber; there rejoice at our Success, and toy away an Hour in Mirth.

Mask. I will not fail.

SCENE III.

Maskwell alone.

I know what she means by toying away an Hour well enough. Pox I have lost all Appetite to her; yet she's a fine Woman, and I lov'd her once. But I don't now, since I have been in a great Measure kept by her, the Case is alter'd; what was my Pleasure is become my Duty: And I have as little Stomach to her now as if I were her Husband. Should she smother my Design upon *Cynthia*, I were in a fine Pickle. She has a damned penetrating Head, and knows how to interpret a Coldness the right Way; therefore I must dissemble Ardour and Ecstasy, that's resolv'd: How easily and pleasantly is that dissembled before Fruition! Pox on't that a Man can't drink without quenching his Thirst. Ha! yonder comes *Mellefont* thoughtful. Let me think: Meet her at Eight—hum—ha! By Heav'n I have it—If I can speak to my Lord before—Was it my Brain or Providence? no matter which

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which—I will deceive 'em all, and yet secure myself:
'Twas a lucky Thought! Well, this Double-Dealing
is a Jewel. Here he comes:—Now for me——

(Maskwell pretending not to see him, walks by
him, and speaks as it were to himself.)

SCENE IV.

(To him) Mellefont musing.

Mask. Mercy on us! what will the Wickedness of
this World come to?

Mell. How now, *Jack*? What, so full of Con-
templation that you run over!

Mask. I'm glad you're come, for I could not con-
tain myself any longer: And was just going to give
Vent to a Secret, which no body but you ought to
drink down.—Your Aunt's just gone from hence.

Mell. And having trusted thee with the Secrets of
her Soul, thou art villainously bent to discover them
all to me, ha?

Mask. I'm afraid my Frailty leans that way——
But I don't know whether I can in Honour discover
them all.

Mell. All, all, Man: What, you may in Honour
betray her, as far as she betrays herself. No tragical
Design upon my Person, I hope?

Mask. No, but it's a comical Design upon mine.

Mell. What dost thou mean?

Mask. Listen and be dumb; we have been bargai-
ning about the Rate of your Ruin——

Mell. Like any two Guardians to an Orphan Hei-
ress——Well.

Mask. And whereas Pleasure is generally paid with
Mischief, what Mischief I do is to be paid with Pleasure.

Mell. So when you've swallow'd the Potion, you
sweeten your Mouth with a Plumb.

Mask. You are merry, Sir, but I shall probe your
Constitution. In short, the Price of your Banishment
is to be paid with the Person of——

Mell. Of *Chynthia*, and her Fortune——Why you
forget you told me this before.

Mask. No, no——So far you are right; and I am
as an Earnest of that Bargain, to have full and free
Possession of the Person of——your Aunt.

Mell. Ha! Pho, you trifle.

Mask.

Mask. By this Light, I'm serious ; all Rallery apart—
I knew 'twould stun you : This Evening at Eight, she
will receive me in her Bed Chamber.

Mell. Hell and the Devil ! is she abandon'd of all
Grace—Why the Woman is possess'd——

Mask. Well, will you go in my Stead ?

Mell. By Heav'n into a hot Furnace sooner.

Mask. No, you would not——It would not be so
convenient, as I can order Matters.

Mell. What d'ye mean !

Mask. Mean ? not to disappoint the Lady, I assure
you——Ha, ha, ha, how gravely he looks——Come,
come, I won't perplex you. 'Tis the only Thing that
Providence could have contriv'd to make me capable
of serving you, either to my Inclination or your own
Necessity.

Mell. How, how, for Heav'n's Sake, dear *Mask*—
well ?

Mask. Why thus—I'll go according to appointment;
you shall have Notice at the critical Minute to come
and surprize your Aunt and me together ; Counterfeit
a Rage against me, and I'll make my Escape through
the private Passage from her Chamber, which I'll take
care to leave open : 'Twill be hard, if then you can't
bring her to any Conditions. For this Discovery will
disarm her of all Defence, and leave her entirely at your
Mercy: Nay, she must ever after be in awe of you.

Mell. Let me adore thee, my better *Genius* ! By
Heav'n I think it is not in the Power of Fate to disap-
point my Hopes——My Hopes ! my Certainty.

Mask. Well, I'll meet you here, within a Quarter
of eight, and give you Notice.

Mell. Good Fortune ever go along with thee.

S C E N E V.

Mellefont, Careless.

F Care. Mellefont, get out o'th' Way ; my Lady *Ply-*
ant's coming, and I shall never succeed while thou art
in Sight——Tho' she begins to tack about ; but I
made Love a great while to no Purpose.

Mell. Why what's the matter : She's convinc'd
that I don't care for her.

Care. I can't get an Answer from her, that does
not

not begin with her Honour, or her Virtue, her Religion, or some such Cant. Then she has told me the whole History of Sir Paul's nine Years Courtship; how he has lain for whole Nights together upon the Stairs, before her Chamber Door; and that the first Favour he receiv'd from her, was a Piece of an old Scarlet Petticoat for a Stomacher; which since the Day of his Marriage, he has, out of a Piece of Gallantry, converted into a Night-Cap, and wears it still with much Solemnity on his Anniversary Wedding Night.

Mell. That I have seen, with the Ceremony thereunto belonging—For on that Night he creeps in at the Bed's Feet like a gull'd Bassa that has marry'd a Relation of the *Grand Seigneur*, and that Night he has his Arms at Liberty. Did not she tell you at what a Distance she keeps him? He has confess'd to me that but at some certain Times, that is I suppose when she apprehends being with Child, he never has the Privilege of using the Familiarity of a Husband with a Wife. He was once given to scrambling with his Hands and sprawling in his Sleep; and ever since she has him swaddled up in Blankets, and his Hands and Feet swath'd down, and so put to Bed; and there he lies with a great Beard like a *Russian* Bear upon a Drift of Snow. You are very great with him, I wonder he never told you his Grievances; he will, I warrant you.

Care. Excessively foolish!—but that which gives me most Hopes of her, is her telling me of the many Temptations she has resisted.

Mell. Nay, then you have her; for a Woman's bragging to a Man that she has overcome Temptations, is an Argument that they were weakly offer'd, and a Challenge to him to engage her more irresistably. 'Tis only an enhancing the Price of the Commodity, by telling you how many Customers have underbid her.

Care. Nay, I don't despair—But still she has a grudging to you—I talk'd to her t'other Night at my Lord Froth's Masquerade, when I'm satisfy'd she knew me, and I had no Reason to complain of my Reception; but I find Women are not the same bare-fac'd as in Masks,—and a Vizer disguises their Inclinations as much as their Faces.

Mell.

Mell. 'Tis a Mistake, for Women may most properly be said to be unmask'd when they wear Vizors; for that secures them from blushing, and being out of Countenance, and next to being in the Dark, or alone, they are most truly themselves in a Vizor Mask. Here they come, I'll leave you. Ply her close, and by and by clap a *Billet doux* into her Hand: For a Woman never thinks a Man truly in Love with her, 'till he has been Fool enough to think of her out of her Sight, and to lose so much time as to write to her.

S C E N E VI.

Careless, Sir Paul Plyant, and Lady Plyant.

Sir P. Shan't we disturb your Meditation, Mr. Careless? You wou'd be private.

Care. You bring that along with you, Sir Paul, that shall be always welcome to my Privacy.

Sir P. O, sweet Sir, you load your humble Servants, both me and my Wife, with continual Favours.

Lady P. Sir Paul, what a Phrase was there? You will be making Answers, and taking that upon you, which ought to lie upon me: That you should have so little Breeding to think Mr. Careless did not apply himself to me. Pray what have you to entertain any Bodies Privacy? I swear and declare in the Face of the World, I'm ready to blush for your Ignorance.

Sir P. I acquiesce, my Lady; but don't snub so loud.

(*Aside to her.*)

Lady P. Mr. Careless, if a Person that is wholly illiterate, might be supposed to be capable of being qualified to make a suitable Return to those Obligations, which you are pleased to confer upon one, that is wholly incapable of being qualified in all those Circumstances, I'm sure I shou'd rather attempt it than any thing in the World, (*courtsies*) for I'm sure, there's nothing in the World that I could rather, (*courtsies*) But I know Mr. Careless is so great a Critick and so fine a Gentleman, that it is impossible for me—

Care. O Heav'ns! Madam, you confound me.

Sir P. Gads bud, she's a fine Person—

Lady P. O Lord! Sir, pardon me, we Women have

not

not those Advantages: I know my own Imperfections
——But at the same Time you must give me Leave to
declare in the Face of the World, that nobody is more
sensible of Favours and Things; for which the Reserve
of my Honour, I assure you, Mr. *Careless*, I don't
know any thing in the World, I would refuse to a Per-
son so meritorious—You'll pardon my want of Ex-
pression.

Care. O your Ladyship is abounding in all Excel-
lence, particularly that of Phrase.

Lady *P*. You're so obliging, Sir.

Care. Your Ladyship is so charming.

Sir *P*. So, now, now; now, my Lady.

Lady *P*. So well bred.

Care. So surprizing.

Lady *P*. So well dress'd, so *bone mine*, so eloquent.
so unaffected, so easie, so free, so particular, so agreea-
ble——

Sir *P*. Ay, so, so, there.

Care. O Lord, I beseech you, Madam, don't——

Lady *P*. So gay, so graceful, so good Teeth, so fine
Shape, so fine Limbs, so fine Linnen, and I don't
doubt but you have a very good Skin, Sir.

Care. For Heav'n's Sake, Madam——I'm quite
out of Countenance.

Sir *P*. And my Lady's quite out of Breath; or
else you should hear——Gad's bud, you may talk of
my Lady *Froth*.

Care. O fie, fie, not to be named of a Day—My
Lady *Froth* is very well in her Accomplishments——
But it is when my Lady *Plyant* is not thought of—If
that can ever be.

Lady *P*. O you overcome me——that is so excessive.

Sir *P*. Nay, I swear and Vow that was pretty.

Care. O Sir *Paul*, you are the happiest Man alive.
Such a Lady! that is the Envy of her own Sex, and
the Admiration of ours.

Sir *P*. Your humble Servant. I am, I thank Heav'n,
in a fine way of living, as I may say, peacefully and
happily, and I think need not envy any of my Neigh-
bours, blessed be Providence—Ay, truly, Mr. *Care-
less*, my Lady is a great Blessing, a fine, discreet, well-
spoken

spoken Woman as you shall see—If it becomes me to say so; and we live very comfortably together; she is a little hasty sometimes, and so am I; but mine's soon over, and then I am so sorry—O Mr. *Careless*, if it were not for one thing—

S C E N E VII.

Careless, Sir Paul Plyant, Lady Plyant, Boy with a Letter.

Lady P. How often have you been told of that, you Jackanapes?

Sir P. Gads so, gad's-bud—*Tim*. carry it to my Lady, you should have carry'd it to my Lady first.

Boy. 'Tis directed to your Worship.

Sir P. Well, well, my Lady reads all Letters first—Child do so no more; d'ye her *Tim*.

Boy. No, an't please you.

S C E N E VIII.

Careless, Sir Paul Plyant, Lady Plyant.

Sir P. A Humour of my Wife's, you know Women have little Fancies—But as I was telling you, Mr. *Careless*, if it were not for one thing, I should think myself the happiest Man in the World? indeed that touches me near, very near.

Care. What can that be, Sir Paul?

Sir P. Why, I have, thank Heav'n, a very plentiful Fortune, a good Estate in the Country, some Houses in Town, and some Money, a pretty tolerable personal Estate; and it is a great Grief to me, indeed it is, Mr. *Careless*, that I have not a Son to inherit this—'Tis true, I have a Daughter, and a fine Dutiful Child she is, though I say it, blessed be Providence I may say; for indeed, Mr. *Careless*, I am mightily beholden to Providence—A poor unworthy Sinner—But if I had a Son, ah, that's my Affliction, and my only Affliction; indeed I cannot refrain Tears when it comes in my Mind.

Care. Why, methinks that might be easily remedied—my Lady's a fine likely Woman—

Sir P. Oh, a fine likely Woman as you shall see in a Summer's Day—Indeed she is, Mr. *Careless* in all Respects.

Care. And I should not have taken you to have been so old—

Sir

Sir P. Alas, that's not it, Mr. *Careless*; ah! that's not it; no, no, you shoot wide of the Mark a Mile; indeed you do, that's not it, Mr. *Careless*; no, no! that's not it.

Care. No, what can be the Matter then?

Sir P. You'll scarcely believe me, when I shall tell you——my Lady is so nice——It's very strange, but it's true: Too true——she's so very nice, that I don't believe she would touch a Man for the World——At least not above once a Year; I'm sure I have found it so; and alas, what's once a Year to an old Man, who would do good in his Generation? Indeed it's true, Mr. *Careless*, it breaks my Heart—I am her Husband, as I may say, tho' far unworthy of that Honour, yet I am her Husband; but alas-a-day, I have no more Familiarity with her Person—as to that Matter than with my own Mother——no indeed.

Care. Alas-a-day, this is a lamentable Story? my Lady must be told on't; she must 'faith, Sir *Paul*; 'tis an Injury to the World.

Sir P. Ah! would to Heav'n you would, Mr. *Careless*; you are mightily in her Favour.

Care. I warrant you: what, we must have a Son some way or other.

Sir P. Indeed I should be mightily bound to you, if you could bring it about, Mr. *Careless*.

Lady P. Here, Sir *Paul*, it's from your Steward, here's a Return of 600 l. you may take 50 l. of it for the next half Year. *(Gives him the Letter.)*

S C E N E IX.

(To them.) Lord Froth, Cynthia.

Sir P. How does my Girl? come hither to thy Father poor Lamb, thou art Melancholic.

Lord Froth. Heav'n, Sir *Paul*, you amaze me, of all things in the World——You are never pleas'd but we are all upon the broad Grim; all Laugh and no Company; then 'tis such a Sight to see some Teeth——Sure you're a great Admirer of my Lady *Whifler*, Mr. *Sneer*, and Sir *Laurence Loud*, and that Gang.

Sir P. I vow and swear she's a very merry Woman, but I think she laughs a little too much.

Lord Froth. Merry! O Lord, what a Character that

D

is

is of a Woman of Quality——You have been at my Lady *Whifler's* upon her Day, Madam?

Cyn. Yes, my Lord——I must humour this Fool. *(Aside.)*

Lord Froth. Well and how? hee! what is your Sense of the Conversation?

Cyn. O most ridiculous, a perpetual Consort of Laughing without any Harmony; for sure, my Lord, to laugh out of Time, is as disagreeable as to sing out of Time or out of Tune.

Lord Froth. Hee, hee, hee, right; and then my Lady *Whifler* is so ready——she always comes in three Barrs too soon——And then what do they laugh at? for you know laughing without a Jest is as impertinent; hee! as, as——

Cyn. As dancing without a Fiddle.

Lord Froth. Just, 'ifaith: that was at my Tongue's end'.

Cyn. But that cannot be properly said of them, for I think they are all in good Nature with the World, and only laugh at one another; and you must allow they have all Jest in their Persons, though they have none in their Conversation.

Lord Froth. True, as I'm a Person of Honour——For Heav'n's sake let us sacrifice 'em to Mirth a little.

(Enter Boy and whispers Sir Paul.)

Sir P. Gads so——Wife Wife, my Lady *Plyant*, I have a Word.

Lady P. I'm busie, *Sir Paul*; I wonder at your Impertinence——

Care. *Sir Paul*, harkye, I'm reasoning the Matter you know; Madam——if your Ladyship please, we'll discourse of this in the next Room.

Sir P. O ho, I wish you good Success. I wish you good Success. Boy, tell my Lady, when she has done, I will speak with her below.

S C E N E X.

Cynthia, Lord Froth, Lady Froth, Brisk.

Lady Froth. Then you think that *Episode* between *Susan*, the Dairy-maid, and our Coach-Man is not amiss; you know I may suppose the Dairy in Town, as well as in the Country.

Brisk. Incomparable, let me perish —— But then being

being an Heroick Poem, had not you better call him a *Charioteer* ! *Charioteer* sounds great; besides your Ladyship's Coach-man having a red Face, and you Comparing him to the Sun ——— and you know the Sun is called *Heaven's Charioteer*.

Lady Froth. O infinitely better; I'm extremely beholden to you for the Hint; stay, we'll read over those half score Lines again. (*Pulls out a Paper.*) Let me see here you know what goes before — the Comparison you know.

*For as the Sun shines every Day,
So of our Coach-man I may say.*

Brisk. I'm afraid that Simile won't do in wet Weather — Because you say the Sun shines every Day.

Lady Froth. No, for the Sun it won't, but it will do for the Coachman, for you know there's most Occasion for a Coach in wet Weather.

Brisk. Right, right; that saves all.

Lady Froth. Then I don't say the Sun shines all the Day, but that he peeps now and then, yet he does shine all the Day too, you know, though we do not see him.

Brisk. Right, but the Vulgar will never comprehend that.

Lady Froth. Well, you shall hear——Let me see. (*Reads.*) *For as the Sun shines ev'ry Day,*

*So, of our Coachman I may say,
He shows his drunken fiery Face,
Just as the Sun does more or less.*

Brisk. That's right, all's well, all's well. *More or less.*

Lady Froth. (*Reads.*)

*And when at Night his Labour's done,
Then too, like Heaven's Charioteer the Sun:*

Ay, Charioteer does better.

*Into the Dairy he descends,
And there his Whipping and his Driving ends,
There he's secure from Danger of a Bilk,
His Fare is paid him and he sets in Milk.*

For Susan, you know, is *Thetis* and so——

Brisk. Incomparable well and proper, I gad — But I have one Exception to make— Don't you think *Bilk* (I know it is good Rhime) but don't you think *Bilk* and *Fare* too like a Hackney Coach-man?

Lady Froth. I swear and vow I'm afraid so ———
And yet our *Jebu* was a Hackney Coachman, when
my Lord took him.

Brisk. Was he? I'm answer'd, if *Jebu* was a Hackney Coachman——You may put that in the marginal Notes, tho' to prevent Criticism——Only mark it with a small Asterism and say,——*Jebu* was formerly a Hackney Coachman

Lady Froth. I will; you'd oblige me extremely to write Notes to the whole Poem.

Brisk. With all my Heart and Soul, and proud of the vast Honour, let me perish.

Lord Froth. Hee, hee hee, my Dear, have you done——won't you join with us? we were laughing at my Lady *Whiffler* and Mr. *Sneer*.

Lady Froth.——Ay my Dear——Were you? Oh filthy Mr. *Sneer*; he's a nauseous Figure, a most fulsamick Fop, foh——He spent two Days together in going about *Covent-Garden* to suit the Lining of his Coach with his Complexion.

Lord Froth. O silly! yet his Aunt is as fond of him, as if she had brought the Ape into the World herself.

Brisk. Who, my Lady *Toothless*? O she's a mortifying Spectacle; she's always chewing the Cud like an old Yew.

Cyn. Fie, Mr. *Brisk*! *Eringo's* for her Cough.

Lady Froth. I have seen her take 'em half-chew'd out of her Mouth, to laugh, and then put 'em in again——Foh.

Lord Froth. Foh.

Lady Froth. Then she's always ready to laugh when *Sneer* offers to speak——And sits in Expectation of his no Jest, with her Gums bare and her Mouth open——

Brisk. Like an Oyster at Low Ebb, I 'gad,——Ha, ha, ha.

Cyn. (*Aside.*) Well, I find there are no Fools so inconsiderable in themselves, but they can render other People contemptible by exposing their Infirmities.

Lady Froth. Then that t'other great strapping Lady——I can't hit of her Name; the old fat Fool that paints so exorbitantly.

Brisk. I know whom you mean——But Duce take me

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me I can't hit of her Name neither——Paints, d'ye say? Why she lays it on with a Trowel——Then she has a great Beard that bristles thro' it, and makes her look as if she were plaister'd wth Lime and Hair, let me perish.

Lady Froth. Oh you made a Song upon her, Mr. Brisk.

Brisk. He? egad, so I did——my Lord can sing it.

Cyn. O good my Lord lets hear it.

Brisk. 'Tis not a Song neither——It's a Sort of an Epigram, or rather an epigramatick Sonnet, I don't know what to call it, but it's Satire.——Sing it, my Lord.

Lord Froth sings.

Antient Phillis has young Graces,

'Tis a strange thing, but a true one;

Shall I tell you how?

She herself makes her own Faces,

And each mourning wears a new one;

Where's the Wonder now?

Brisk. Short, but there's Salt in't; my Way of Writing, I gad.

SCENE XI.

(To them.) Footman.

Lady Froth. How now?

Foot. Your Ladyship's Chair is come.

Lady Froth. Is Nurse and the Child in it?

Foot. Yes, Madam.

Lady Froth. O the dear Creature! let's go and see it.

Lord Froth. I swear, my Dear, you'll spoil that Child, with sending it to and again so often; this is the seventh Time the Chair has gone for her to Day.

Lady Froth. O Law, I swear it's but the sixth——and I han't seen her these two Hours——The poor dear Creature——I swear, my Lord, you don't love poor little *Sapho*——Come, dear *Cynthia*, Mr. Brisk, we'll go see *Sapho*, tho' my Lord won't.

Cyn. I'll wait upon your Ladyship.

Brisk. Pray, Madam, how old is Lady *Sapho*?

Lady Froth. Three Quarters, but I swear she has a World of Wit, and can sing a Tune already. My Lord, won't you go? won't you? What, not to see *Sapho*?

D 3

Pray,

Pray, my Lord, come see little *Sapp*. I knew you could not stay.

SCENE XII.

Cynthia, alone.

'Tis not so hard to counterfeit Joy in the Depth of Affliction, as to dissemble Mirth in the Company of Fools — Why should I call 'em Fools? The World thinks better of 'em; for these have Quality and Education, Wit and fine Conversation, are received and admired by the World — If not, they like and admire themselves — And why is not that true Wisdom, for 'tis Happiness: And for ought I know, we have misapply'd the Name all this While, and mistaken the Thing: Since,

*If Happiness in Self-Content is plac'd,
The Wise are wretched, and Fools only blest'd.*

ACT IV. SCENE I.

Mellefont and Cynthia.

Cynthia. I Heard him loud as I came by the Closet Door, and my Lady with him, but she seem'd to moderate his Passion.

Mel. Ay, He'll thank her, as gentle Breezes moderate a Fire; but I shall counter-work her Spells, and ride the Witch in her own Bridle.

Cyn. It's impossible; she'll cast beyond you still — I'll lay my Life it never will be a Match.

Mel. What?

Cyn. Between us.

Mel. Why so?

Cyn. My Mind gives me it won't — because we are both willing; we each of us strive to reach the Goal, and hinder one another in the Race; I swear it will be so, till when the Parties are so agreed — For when we walk Hand in Hand, there's neither overtaking nor meeting: We hunt in Couples where we both pursue the same Game, but forget one another, and 'tis because we are so near that we don't think of coming together.

Mel. Hum, 'gad I believe there's something in't; — Marriage is the Game that we hunt, and while we think that we only have it in View, I don't see but we have it in our Power.

Cyn.

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Cyn. Within reach ; for Example, give me your Hand ; you have look'd through the wrong End of the Perspective all this While ; for nothing has been between us but our Fears.

Mel. I don't know why we should not steal out of the House this very Moment and marry one another, without Consideration or the Fear of Repentance. Pox o' Fortune, Portion, Settlements and Jointures.

Cyn. Ay, ay, what have we to do with 'em ; you know we marry for Love.

Mel. Love, Love, down right very villainous Love.

Cyn. And he that can't live upon Love, deserves to die in a Ditch—Here then, I give you my Promise, in spite of Duty, any Temptation of Wealth your Inconstancy, or my own Inclination to change—

Mel. To run most wilfully and unreasonably away with me this Moment, and be married.

Cyn. Hold—Never to marry any Body else.

Mel. That's but a kind of negative Consent — Why, you won't baulk the Frolick ?

Cyn. If you had not been so assured of your own Conduct I would not—But 'tis but reasonable that since I consent to like a Man without the vile Consideration of Money, he should give me a very evident Demonstration of his Wit : Therefore let me see you undermine my Lady *Touchwood* as you boasted, and force her to give her Consent, and then—

Mel. I'll do't.

Cyn. And I'll do't.

Mel. This very next ensuing Hour of eight o'Clock is the last Minute of her Reign, unless the Devil assist her in *propria Persona*.

Cyn. Well, if the Devil should assist her, and your Plot miscarry—

Mel. Ay, what am I to trust to then ?

Cyn. Why if you give me a very clear Demonstration that it was the Devil, I'll allow for irresistible Odds. But if I find it to be only Chance, or Destiny, or unlucky Stars, or any Thing but the very Devil, I'm inexorable : Only still I'll keep my Word, and live a Maid for your sake.

Mel. And you won't die one, for your own ; so still there's Hope.

Cyn.

Cyn. Here's my Mother-in-law, and your Friend *Careless*; I would not have them see us together yet.

SCENE II.

Careless and Lady Plyant.

Lady P. I swear, Mr. *Careless*, you are very alluring—And say so many fine Things, and nothing is so moving to me as a fine Thing. Well, I must do you this Justice, and declare in the Face of the World never any Body gained so far upon me as your self; with Blushes I must own it, you have shaken, as I may say, the very Foundation of my Honour—Well, sure if I escape your Importunities, I shall value my self as long as I live, I swear.

Care. And despise me.

(*Sighing.*

Lady P. The last of any Man in the World, by my Puri y; now you make me swear—O Gratitude for't, that I should ever be wanting in a respectful Acknowledgement of an intire Resignation of all my best Wishes, for the Person and Parts of so accomplish'd a Person, whose Merit challenges much more, I'm sure, than my illiterate Phrases can Description—

Care. (*in a whining Tone*) Ah Heav'ns, Madam, you ruin me with Kindness; your charming Tongue pursues the Victory of your Eyes, while at your Feet your poor Adorer dies.

Lady P. Ah! very fine.

Care. (*still whining.*) Ah why are you so fair, so bewitching fair? O let me grow to the Ground here, and feast upon that Hand; O let me press it to my Heart, my trembling Heart, the nimble Movement shall instruct your Pulse, and teach it to alarm Desire. (*Zoons, I'm almost at the End of my Cant, if she does not yield quickly.*)

(*Aside.*

Lady P. O that's so fine, I cannot hear it—I am not safe if I stay, and must leave you.

Care. And must you leave me? Rather let me languish out a wretched Life, and breath my Soul beneath your Feet.

(*Aside.*

(*I must say the same Thing over again, and can't help it.*

Lady P. I swear I'm ready to languish too—I O my Honour! whither is it going? I protest you have given me the Palpatation of the Heart.

Care.

Care. Can you be so cruel?—

Lady P. O rise I beseech you, say no more 'till you rise—Why did you kneel so long? I swear I was so transported, I did not see it.—Well to shew you how far you have gained upon me; I assure you if Sir Paul should die, of all Mankind there's none I'd sooner make my second Choice.

Care. O Heav'n! I can't out-live this Night without your Favour—I feel my Spirits faint, a general Dampness overspreads my Face, a cold deadly Dew already vents through all my Pores, and will to-Morrow wash me for ever from your Sight, and drown me in my Tomb.

Lady P. O you have conquer'd, sweet, melting, moving Sir, you have conquer'd—What Heart of Marble can refrain to weep, and yield to such sad Sayings,———

(Cries.

Care. I thank Heav'n, they are the saddest that I ever said—Oh! (I shall never contain Laughter.

(Aside.

Lady P. Oh, I yield myself all up to your uncontrollable Embraces—Say, thou dear dying Man, when, where, and how.—Ah, there's Sir Paul.

Care. 'Slife, yonder's Sir Paul; but if he were not come, I'm so transported I cannot speak—This Note will inform you. (Gives her a Note.

S C E N E III.

Lady Pliant, Sir Paul Plyant, Cynthia.

Sir P. Thou art my tender Lambkin, and shalt do what thou wilt—But endeavour to forget this *Mel. Isfont.*

Cyn. I would obey you to my Power, Sir; but if I have not him, I have sworn never to marry.

Sir P. Never to marry! Heav'n's forbid; must I neither have Sons nor Grandsons? Must the Family of the *Pliants* be utterly extinct for want of issue Male. Oh Impiety! But did you swear, did that sweet Creature swear! ha? How durst you swear without my Consent, ah? Gads-bud, who am I?

Cyn. Pray don't be angry Sir; when I swore, I had your Consent, and therefore I swore.

Sir P.

Sir P. Why then the revoking my Consent, does annul or make of none Effect your Oath : So you may answer it again—The Law will allow it.

Cyn. Ay, but my Conscience never will.

Sir P. Gads-bud no matter for that, Conscience and Law never go together ; you must not expect that.

Lady P. Ay, but Sir Paul, I conceive if she has sworn, d'ye mark me, if she has once sworn, it is most unchristian, inhuman, and obscene that she should break it.—I'll make up the Match again, because Mr. Careless said it would oblige him. (*Aside.*)

Sir P. Does your Ladyship conceive so—Why, I was of that Opinion once too—Nay, if your Ladyship conceives so, I am of that Opinion again ; but I can neither find my Lord nor my Lady to know what they intend.

Lady P. I am satisfy'd that my Cousin Mellefont has been much wrong'd.

Cyn. (*Aside.*) I'm amaz'd to find her of our Side, for I'm sure she lov'd him.

Lady P. I know my Lady Touchwood has no kindness for him, and besides I have been inform'd by Mr. Careless, that Mellefont had never any thing more than a profound Respect—That he has own'd himself to be my Admirer 'tis true, but he was never so presumptuous to entertain any dishonourable Notions of Things ; so that if this be made plain—I don't see how my Daughter can in Conscience or Honour, or any thing in the World—

Sir P. Indeed if this be made plain, as my Lady your Mother says, Child—

Lady P. Plain ! I was informed of it by Mr. Careless—And I assure you Mr. Careless is a Person—that has a most extraordinary Respect and Honour for you Sir Paul.

Cyn. (*Aside.*) And for your Ladyship too, I believe or else you had not chang'd Sides so soon ; now I begin to find it.

Sir P. I am much oblig'd to Mr. Careless really, he is a Person that I have a great Value for, not only

ly for that, but because he has a great Veneration for your Ladyship.

Lady P. O lafs, no indeed, Sir Paul, 'tis upon your Account.

Sir P. No, I protest and vow, I have no Title to his Esteem, but in having the Honour to appertain in some Measure to your Ladyship, that's all.

Lady P. O law now, I swear and declare, it shan't be so, you are too modest, Sir Paul.

Sir P. It becomes me, when there is any Comparison made, between—

Lady P. O fy, fy, Sir Paul, you'll put me out of Countenance—Your very obedient and affectionate Wife; that's all—And highly honour'd in that Title.

Sir P. Gads-bud I am transported! give me leave to kiss your Ladyship's Hand.

Cyn. That my poor Father should be so very silly!

(*Aside.*)

Lady P. My Lip indeed, Sir Paul, I swear you shall.

(*He kisses her, and bows very low.*)

Sir P. I humbly thank your Ladyship—I don't know whether I fly on Ground, or walk in Air.—Gads-bud, she was never thus before—Well, I must own my self the most beholden to Mr. Careless—As sure as can be this is all his doing,—something that he has said; well, 'tis a rare thing to have an ingenious Friend. Well your Ladyship is of Opinion that the Match may go forward?

Lady P. By all means—Mr. Careless has satisfy'd me of the Matter.

Sir P. Well, why then Lamb you may keep your Oath, but have a care of making rash Vows; come hither to me, and kiss Papa.

Lady P. I swear and declare, I am in such a twiter to read Mr. Careless his Letter, that I can't forbear any longer—But though I may read all Letters first by Prerogative, yet I'll be sure to be unsuspected this time—Sir Paul.

Sir P. Did your Ladyship call?

Lady P. Nay, not to interrupt you, my Dear—Only lend me your Letter, which you had from your Steward

Steward, to Day, I would look upon the Account again; and may be increase your Allowance.

Sir P. There it is, Madam; Do you want a Pen and Ink? *(Bows and gives the Letter.)*

Lady P. No, no, nothing else, I thank you, Sir Paul.——So, now I can read my own Letter under the Cover of his. *(Aside.)*

Sir P. He? and wilt thou bring a Grandson at nine Months end——He? A brave chopping Boy——I'll settle a thousand Pound a Year upon the Rogue as soon as he looks me in the Face, I will Gads-bud. I'm overjoy'd to think I have any of my Family that will bring Children into the World. For I would fain have some Resemblance of my self in my Posterity, he *Thy*? can't you contrive that Affair, Girl? Do, Gads-bud, think on thy old Father; he? Make the young Rogue as like as you can.

Cyn. I'm glad to see you so merry, Sir. *hine*

Sir P. Merry! Gads-bud I'm serious, I'll give you 1000 l. for every Inch of ~~_____~~ *ah* this Eye, this left Eye! A thousand Pound for this left Eye. This has done Execution in its time Girl; why thou hast my Leer, Huffy, just thy Father's Leer——Let it be transmitted to the young Rogue by the help of Imagination; why 'tis the Mark of our Family, *Thy*; our House is distinguish'd by a languishing Eye as the House of *Austria* is by a thick Lip.——Ah! when I was of your Age Huffy, I would have held fifty to one, I could have drawn my own Picture——Gads-bud I could have done——not so much as you neither.——but——nay, don't blush——

Cyn. I don't blush, Sir, for I vow I don't understand——

Sir P. Pshaw, Pshaw, you fib you Baggage, you do understand, and you shall understand; come, don't be so nice, Gads-bud don't learn after your Mother-in-law my Lady here: Marry Heav'n forbid that you should follow her Example, that would spoil all indeed. Bless us, if you should take a Vagarie and make a rash Resolution on your Wedding-Night, to die a Maid, as she did; all were ruin'd, all my Hopes lost——My Heart would break, and my Estate would

be left to the wide World, he? I hope you are a better Christian than to think of living a Nun; he? answer me.

Cyn. I'm all Obedience, Sir, to your Commands.

Lady P. (Having read the Letter.) O dear Mr. *Careless*, I swear he writes charmingly, and he looks charmingly, and he has charm'd me, as much as I have charm'd him; and so I'll tell him in the Wardrobe when 'tis dark. O Crimine! I hope Sir *Paul* has not seen both Letters.

(puts the Letter hastily up, and gives him her own.) Sir *Paul*, here is your Letter; to Morrow-Morning I'll settle Accounts to your Advantage.

SCENE IV.

(Attends them) *Brisk*.

Brisk. Sir *Paul*, Gads bad you're an uncivil Person, let me tell you, and all that; and I did not think it had been in you.

Sir P. O law, what's the Matter now? I hope you are not angry Mr. *Brisk*.

Brisk. Deuce take me I believe you intend to marry your Daughter your self; you're always brooding over her like an old Hen, as if she were not well hatched, I'gad, he?

Sir P. Good strange! Mr. *Brisk* is such a merry facetious person. He, he, he. No, no, I have done with her, I have done with her now.

Brisk. The Fiddles have stay'd this Hour in the Hall, and my Lord *Froth* wants a Partner, we can never begin without her.

Sir P. Go, go, Child, go, get you gone and dance and be merry, I'll come and look at you by and by.

Where's my Son *Mellefont*?

Lady P. I'll send him to them: I know where he is.

Brisk. Sir *Paul*, will you send *Careless* into the Hall if you meet him?

Sir P. I will, I will, I'll go and look for him on purpose.

E

SCENE

S C E N E V.

Brisk alone.

So, now they are all gone, and I have an Opportunity to practise—Ah! my dear Lady Froth! She's a most engaging Creature, if she were not so fond of that damn'd coxcomby Lord of hers; and yet I am forced to allow him Wit too, to keep in with me—No matter she's a Woman of Parts, and I gad Parts will carry her. She said she would follow me into the Gallery—Now to make my Approaches—Hem! hem! Ah Ma. (*Boins.*) dam!—Fox on't, why should I disparage my Parts by thinking what to say? None but dull Rogues *Think*; witty Men, like rich Fellows, are always ready for all Expences; while your Blockheads like poor needy Scoundrels, are forc'd to examine their Stock, and forecast the Charges of the Day. Here she comes, I'll seem not to see her, and try to win her with a new airy Invention of my own: hem!

S C E N E VI.

*(To him.) Lady Froth.**Brisk Sings walking about.*

I'm Sick with Love, ha, ha, ha, pr'ythee come cure me.

I'm sick with, &c.

O ye Pow'rs! O my Lady Froth! my Lady Froth, my Lady Froth, Heigh ho Break my Heart; Gods I thank you.

(Stands musing with his Arms a cross.)

Lady Froth. O Heav'ns, Mr. Brisk! What's the matter?

Brisk. My Lady Froth! Your Ladyship's most humble Servant;—The Matter, Madam? Nothing, Madam, nothing at all I gad! I was fallen into the most agreeable Amusement in the whole Province of Contemplation: That's all—(I'll seem to conceal my Passion, and that will look like Respect.)

(Aside)

Lady Froth. Bless me, why did you call out upon me so loud?—

Brisk. O Lord, I Madam! I beseech your Ladyship—when?

Lady Froth. Just now I came in; bless me! why don't you know it?

Brisk.

Brisk. Not I, let me perish—But did I! Strange! I confess your Ladyship was in my Thoughts; and I was in a sort of Dream that did in a manner present a very pleasing Object to my Imagination, but—but did I indeed?—To see how Love and Murder will out. But did I really name my Lady *Froth*?

Lady Froth. Three times aloud, as I love Letters—but did you talk of Love? O *Parnassus*! Who would have thought Mr. *Brisk* could have been in Love, ha, ha, ha. O Heav'ns! I thought you cou'd have no Mistress but the Nine-Muses.

Brisk. No more I have I! gad, for I adore 'em all in your Ladyship—Let me perish. I don't know whether to be splenatick, or airy upon't; the Deuce take me if I can tell whether I am glad or sorry that your Ladyship has made the Discovery.

Lady Froth. O be merry by all means—Prince *Helsius* in Love! Ha, ha, ha.

Brisk. O barbarous, to turn me into Ridicule! Yet, ha, ha, ha. The Deuce take me, I can't help laughing myself, ha, ha, ha; yet by Heav'ns I have a violent Passion for your Ladyship, seriously.

Lady Froth. Seriously? Ha, ha, ha.

Brisk. Seriously, ha, ha, ha. Gad I have, for all I laugh.

Lady Froth. Ha, ha, ha! What d'ye thing I laugh at? Ha, ha, ha.

Brisk. Me I! gad, ha, ha.

Lady Froth. No, the Deuce take me if I don't laugh at myself; for hang me if I have not a violent Passion for Mr. *Brisk*, ha, ha, ha.

Brisk. Seriously?

Lady Froth. Seriously, ha, ha, ha.

Brisk. That's well enough; let me perish, ha, ha, ha. O miraculous, what a happy Discovery. Ah my dear charming Lady *Froth*!

Lady Froth. Oh my adored Mr. *Brisk*!

(Embrace.)

SCENE VII.

(To them) *Lord Froth.*

Lord Froth. The Company are all ready—How now?

Brisk. Zoons, Madam, there's my Lord.

(Softly to her.)

Lady Froth. Take no Notice—but observe me—Now cast off, and meet me at the lower End of the Room, and then join Hands again; I could teach my Lord this Dance purely, but I vow, Mr. *Brisk*, I can't tell how to come so near any other Man. Oh here's my Lord, now you shall see me do it with him.

(They pretend to practise part of a Country Dance.)

Lord Froth.—Oh, I see there's no Harm yet—But I don't like this Familiarity. *(Aside.)*

Lady Froth.—Shall you and I do our close Dance, to shew Mr. *Brisk*.

Lord Froth. No, my Dear, do it with him.

Lady Froth. I'll do it with him, my Lord, when you are out of the Way. *good again*

Brisk. That's good I'gad, that's good. Deuce take me I can hardly hold laughing in his Face.

Lord Froth. Any other time, my Dear, or we'll Dance it below.

Lady Froth. With all my Heart.

Brisk. Come my Lord, I'll wait on you—My charming witty Angel! *(To her.)*

Lady Froth. We shall have whispering time enough you know, since we are Partners.

SCENE VIII.

Lady Plyant, and Careless.

Lady P. O Mr. *Careless*, Mr. *Careless*, I'm ruin'd, I'm undone!

Care. What's the Matter, Madam?

Lady P. O the unluckiest Accident, I'm afraid I shan't live to tell it you.

Care. Heav'n forbid! What is it?

Lady P. I'm in such a Fright; the strongest Quandary and Premunire! I'm all over in an Universal Agitation, I dare swear every Circumstance of me trembles—O your Letter, your Letter! by an unfortunate Mistake, I have given Sir *Paul* your Letter instead of his own.

Care. That was unlucky.

The Double-Dealer.

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O yonder he comes, reading of it, for Heav'n's sake
step in here and advise me quickly, before he sees.

SCENE IX.

Sir Paul, with a Letter.

Sir P. O Providence! what a Conspiracy have I
discovered—But let me see to make an end on't—
(Reeds) Hum—After Supper in the Wardrobe by
the Gallery. If Sir Paul should surprize us I have
a Commission from him to treat with you about the ve-
ry Matter of Fact—Matter of Fact! Very pret-
ty; it seems then I am conducing to my own Cuc-
koldom; why this is the very traiterous Position of
taking up Arms by my Authority, against my Person!
Well, let me see—Till then I languish in Expec-
tation of my adored Charming.

Dying Ned Careless.

Gads-bud would that were Matter of Fact too. Die
and be damn'd for a Judas Maccabeus, and Iscariot
both. O Friendship! What art thou but a Name!
Henceforward let no Man make a Friend that would
not be a Cuckold; for whomsoever he receives into his
Bosom, will find the way to his Bed, and there return
his Caresses with Interest to his Wife. Have I for
this been pinien'd Night after Night for three Years
past? Have I been swath'd in Blankets 'till I have
been even depriv'd of Motion? Have I approach'd
the Marriage Bed with Reverence as to a sacred
Shrine, and deny'd myself the Enjoyment of lawful
Domestick Pleasures to preserve its Purity, and must
I now find it pollated by foreign Iniquity? O my La-
dy Plyant, you were chaste as Ice, but you are melt-
ed now, and false as Water—But Providence has
been constant to me in discovering this Conspiracy;
still I am beholden to Providence, if it were not for
Providence, sure poor Sir Paul they Heart wou'd
break.

SCENE X.

(To him) Lady Plyant.

Lady P. So, Sir, I see you have read the Letter,
—Well now, Sir Paul what do you think of your
Frind Careless? Has he been treacherous, or did you
give his Insolence a License to make tryal of your
Wife's

Wife's suspected Virtue? D'ye see here? (*Snatches the Letter as in Anger.*) Look, read it! Gad's my Life, if I thought it were so, I would this Moment renounce all Communication with you. Ungrateful Monster! He? Is it so? Ay, I see it, a Plot upon my Honour; your guilty Cheeks confess it: Oh where shall wrong'd Virtue fly for Reparation, I'll be divorced this Instant.

Sir P. Gads-buds what shall I say? This is the strangest Surprize! Why I don't know any thing at all, nor I don't know whether there be any thing at all in the World or no.

Lady P. I thought I should try you, false Man. I that never dissembled in my Life: Yet to make Tryal of you, pretended to like that Monster of Iniquity, *Careless*, and found out that Contrivance to let you see this Letter; which now I find was of your own inditing—I do, heathen, I do; see my Face no more; I'll be divorc'd presently.

Sir P. O strange, what will become of me!— I'm so much amaz'd, and so overjoy'd, so afraid, and so sorry. But did you give me this Letter on Purpose, he? Did you.

Lady P. Did I? Do you doubt me, Turk, Saracen? I have a Cousin that's a Proctor in the Commons, I'll go to him instantly.—

Sir P. Hold; stay, I beseech your Ladyship—I'm so overjoy'd, stay, I'll confess all.

Lady P. What will you confess, Jew?

Sir P. Why now, as I hop'd to be saved, I had no Hand in this Letter——Nay hear me, I beseech your Ladyship: The Devil take me now if he did not go beyond my Commission—If I desired him to do any more than speak a good Word only just for me; Gads-bud only for poor Sir Paul, I'm an Anabaptist, or a Jew, or what you please to call me.

Lady P. Why is not here Matter of Fact?

Sir P. Ay, but by your own Virtue and Continency that Matter of Fact is all his own doing—— I confess I had a great Desire to have some honours conferr'd upon me, which lye in your Ladyship's Breast, and he being a well-spoken Man, I desired him to intercede for me.

Lady

The Double-Dealer.

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Lady P. Did you so! Presumption! Oh! he comes, the *Tarquin* comes; I cannot bear his Sight.

SCENE XI.

Careless, *Sir Paul Plyant.*

Care. *Sir Paul*, I'm glad I've met with you; gad I have said all I could, but can't prevail — Then my Friendship to you has carry'd me a little farther in this Matter —

Sir P. Indeed — Well Sir — I'll dissemble with him a little.

Care. Why Faith I have in my Time known honest Gentlemen abused by a pretended Coyness in their Wives, and I had a mind to try my Lady's Virtue — And when I could not prevail for you, 'gad I pretended to be in Love my self — but all in Vain, she would not hear a Word upon that Subject: Then I writ a Letter to her; I don't know what Effects that will have, but I'll be sure to tell you when I do, tho' by this Light I believe her Virtue is impregnable.

Sir P. O Providence! Providence! What Discoveries are here made? Why, this is better and more miraculous than the rest.

Care. What do you mean?

Sir P. I can't tell you, I'm so overjoy'd? come along with me to my Lady, I can't contain myself; come my dear Friend.

Care. So, so, so, this Difficulty's over. (*Aside.*)

SCENE XII.

Mellefont, Maskwell, from different Doors.

Mel. *Maskwell!* I have been looking for you — 'tis within a Quarter of Eight.

Mask. My Lady is just gone into my Lord's Closet, you had best steal into her Chamber before she comes, and lye concealed there, otherwise she may lock the Door when we are together, and you not easily get in to surprize us.

Mel. He? you say true.

Mask. You had best make haste, for after she has made some Apology to the Company for her own, and my Lord's Absence all this While, she'll retire to her Chamber instantly.

Mel.

Mel. I go this Moment: Now Fortune I defy thee.

S C E N E XIII.

Maskwell, alone.

I confess you may be allow'd to be secure in your own Opinion; th' Appearance is very fair, but I have an After-Game to play that shall turn the Tables, and here comes the Man that I must manage.

S C E N E XIV.

(To him) Lord Touchwood.

Lord Touch. *Maskwell*, you are the Man I wish'd to meet.

Mask. I am happy to be in the Way of your Lordship's Commands.

Lord Touch. I have always found you prudent and careful in any Thing that has concern'd me or my Family.

Mask. I were a Villain else—I am bound by Duty and Gratitude, and my own Inclination, to be ever your Lordship's Servant.

Lord Touch. Enough; you are my Friend; I know it: Yet there has been a Thing in your Knowledge, which has concern'd me nearly, that you have conceal'd from me.

Mask. My Lord!

Lord Touch. Nay, I excuse your Friendship to my unnatural Nephew thus far—But I know you have been privy to his impious Designs upon my Wife: This Evening she has told me all: Her good Nature conceal'd it as long as was possible; but he perseveres so in Villany, that she has told me even you were weary of dissuading him, tho' you have once actually hindered him from forcing her.

Mask. I am sorry, my Lord, I can't make you an Answer; this is an Occasion in which I would not willingly be silent.

Lord Touch. I know you would excuse him—And I know as well that you can't.

Mask. Indeed I was in Hopes 't had been a youthful Heat, that might have soon boil'd over; but—

Lord Touch. Say on.

Mask.

Mask. I have nothing more to say, my Lord—
But to express my Concern ; for I think his Frenzy
increases daily.

Lord Touch. How ! Give me but Proof of it, occu-
lar Proof, that I may justify my Dealing with him to
the World, and share my Fortunes.

Mask. O my Lord ! consider that is hard : Besides,
Time may work upon him ! Then, for me to do it !
I have profess'd an everlasting Friendship to him.

Lord Touch. He is your Friend, and what am I ?

Mask. I am answered.

Lord Touch. Fear not his Displeasure ; I will put
you out of his and Fortune's Power, and for that
thou art scrupulously honest, I will secure thy Fidelity
to him and give my Honour never to own any Dis-
covery that you shall make me. Can you give me a
demonstrative Proof ? Speak.

Mask. I wish I could not—To be plain, my Lord,
I intended this Evening to have try'd all Arguments
to dissuade him from a Design, which I suspect ; and
if I had not succeeded, to have informed your Lord-
ship of what I knew.

Lord Touch. I thank you. What is the Villain's
Purpose ?

Mask. He has own'd nothing to me of late, and
what I mean now, is only a bare Suspicion of my own.
If your Lordship will meet me a Quarter of an Hour
hence there, in that Lobby by my Lady's Bed Cham-
ber, I shall be able to tell you more.

Lord Touch. I will.

Mask. My Duty to your Lordship, makes me do a
severe Piece of Justice.

Lord Touch. I will be secret and reward your Ho-
nesty beyond your Hopes.

SCENE XV.

SCENE opening shows Lady Touchwood's Chamber.
Mellefont, Solus.

Pray Heav'n my Aunt keep Touch with her Affig-
nation—Oh that her Lord were but sweating be-
hind this Hanging, with the Expectation of what I
shall see—Hist, she comes—Little does she think
what

what a Mine is just ready to spring under her Feet.
But to my Post. *(Goes behind the Hanging.)*

S C E N E XVI.

Lady Touch. 'Tis Eight a Clock: Metninks I should have found him here. Who does not prevent the Hour of Love, outstays the Time; for to be dully punctual, is too slow—I was accusing you of Neglect.

S C E N E XVII.

Lady Touchwood and Maskwell.

Mellefont absconding.

Mask. I confess you do reproach me when I see you here before me; but 'tis fit I should be still behind-hand, still to be more and more indebted to your Goodness.

Lady Touch. You can excuse a Fault too well not to have been to blame—A ready Answer shows you were prepar'd.

Mask. Guilt is ever at a Loss, and Confusion waits upon it; when Innocence and bold Truth are always ready for Expression—

Lady Touch. Not in Love; Words are the weak Support of cold Indifference; Love has no Language to be heard.

Mask. Excess of Joy has made me stupid: That may my Lips be ever clos'd, *(kisses her.)* And thus—O who would not lose his Speech upon Condition to have Joys above it?

Lady Touch. Hold, let me lock the Door first.

(Goes to the Door.)

Mask. That I believ'd, 'twas well I left the private Passage open. *(Aside.)*

Lady Touch. So that's safe.

Mask. And so may all your Pleasures be, and secret as this Kiss—

Mel. And may all Treachery be thus discover'd.

(Leaps out.)

Lady Touch. Ah!

(Shrieks.)

Mel. Villain!

(Offers to draw.)

Mask. Nay then, there's but one Way.

(Runs out.)

S C E N E

The Double-Dealer.

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SCENE XVIII.

Lady Touchwood, Mellefont.

Mel. Say you so, were you provided for an Escape; Hold, Madam, you have no more Holes to your Burrough, I'll stand before you and this Sally-port.

Lady Touch. Thunder strike thee dead for this Deceit, immediate Lightning blast thee, me, and the whole World——Oh! I could rack my self, play the Vulture to my own Heart, and gnaw it piece-meal, for not boding to me this Misfortune.

Mel. Be patient——

Lady Touch. Be damn'd.

Mel. Consider I have you on the Hook; you will but flounder yourself a weary, and be nevertheless my Prisoner.

Lady Touch. I'll hold my Breath and die, but I'll be free.

Mel. O Madam have a Care of dying unprepar'd; I doubt you have some unrepented Sins that may hang heavy, and retard your Flight.

Lady Touch. O what shall I do? Say? Whither shall I turn? Has Hell no Remedy?

Mel. None. Hell has serv'd you even as Heav'n has done, left you to your self——You're in a kind of Erasmus's Paradise: yet if you please you may make it a Purgatory; and with a little Penance and my Absolution, all this may turn to good Account.

Lady Touch. (*Aside.*) Hold in my Passion, and fall a little thou swelling Heart; let me have some Intermission of this Rage, and one Minute's Coolness to dissemble, (*She weeps.*)

Mel. You have been to blame——I like those Tears, and hope they are of the purest kind——Penitential Tears.

Lady Touch. O the Scene was shifted quick before me——I had not Time to think——I was surprized to see a Monster in the Glass, and now I find 'tis self; Can you have Mercy to forgive the Faults I have imagin'd, but never put in practice——O consider, consider how fatal you have been to me, you have already kill'd the Quiet of this Life. The Love of you was the first wandring Fire that e'er misled

led my Steps, and while I had only that in View, I was betray'd into unthought-of Ways of Ruin.

Mel. May I believe this true?

Lady Touch. O be not cruelly incredulous — How can you doubt these streaming Eyes? Keep the feverest Eye o'er all my future Conduct; and if I once relapse, let me not hope Forgiveness; 'twill ever be in your Power to ruine me — My Lord shall sign to your Desires; I will my self create your Happiness, and *Cynthia* shall be this Night your Bride — Do but conceal my Failings, and forgive.

Mel. Upon such Terms I will be for ever yours in every honest Way.

SCENE XIX.

Maskwell softly introduces Lord Touchwood, and retires.

Mask. I have kept my Word, he's there, but I must not be seen.

SCENE XX.

Lady Touchwood, Lord Touchwood, Mellefont.

Lord Touch. Hell and Amazement! she's in Tears.

Lady Touch. (*Kneeling*) Eternal Blessings thank you — Ha! My Lord list'ning! O Fortune has o'er-paid me all! all's my own! (*Aside.*)

Mel. Nay I beseech you rise.

Lady Touch. (*Aloud.*) Never, never! I'll grow to the Ground, be buried quick beneath it e're I'll be consenting to so damn'd a Sin as Incest! unnatural Incest!

Mel. Ha!

Lady Touch. O cruel Man, will you not let me go — I'll forgive all that's past — O Heav'n, you will not ravish me!

Mel. Damnation!

Lord Touch. Monster, Dog! your Life shall answer this —

(*Draws and runs at Mellefont, is held by Lady Touchwood.*)

Lady Touch. O Heav'ns my Lord! Hold, hold, for Heav'ns sake.

Mel. Confusion! my Uncle! O the damn'd Sorcerers!

Lady Touch. Moderate your Rage, good my Lord!

He's

He's Mad, alas he's mad — Indeed he is, my Lord, and knows not what he does — See how wild he looks.

Mel. By Heav'n 'twere senseless not to be mad, and see such Witchcraft.

Lady Touch. My Lord, you hear him, he talks idly.

Lord Touch. Hence from my Sight, thou living Infamy to my Name ; when next I see that Face, I'll write Villain in't with my Sword's Point.

Mel. Now, by my Soul, I will not go 'till I have made known my Wrongs — Nay, 'till I have made known yours, (which if possible) are greater — though she has all the Host of Hell her Servants.

Lady Touch. Alas he raves ! Talks very Poetry ! For Heav'n's sake away my Lord ! he'll either tempt you to Extravagance, or commit some himself.

Mel. Death and Furies, will you not hear me — Why by Heav'n, she laughs, grins, points to your Back ; she forks out Cuckeldom with her Fingers, and you're running horn-mad after your Fortune.

(*As she is going she turns back and smiles at him.*)

Lord Touch. I fear he's mad indeed — Let's send *Maskwell* to him.

Mel. Send him to her.

Lady Touch. Come, come, good my Lord, my Heart akes so, I shall faint if I stay.

S C E N E XXI.

Mellefont alone.

O I could curse my Stars, Fate and Chance ; all Causes and Accidents of Fortune in this Life ! But to what Purpose ? Yet, 'sdeath, for a Man to have the Fruit of all his Industry grow full and ripe, ready to drop into his Mouth, and just when he holds out his Hand to gather it, to have a sudden Whirlwind come, tear up Tree and all, and bear away the very Root and Foundation of all his Hopes ; what Temper can contain ? They talk of sending *Maskwell* to me ; I never had more need of him — But what can he do ? Imagination cannot form a fairer and more plausible Design than this of his, which has miscarried — O my precious Aunt, I shall never thrive without I deal with the Devil, or another Woman.

*Women like Flames have a destroying pow'r,
Ne'er to be quench'd, 'till they themselves devour.*

ACT V. SCENE I.

Lady Touchwood and Maskwell.

Lady Touchwood.

WAS'T not lucky?

Mask. Lucky! Fortune is your own, and 'tis her Interest so to be; by Heav'n I believe you can controul her Pow'r, and she fears; tho' Chance brought my Lord, 'twas your own Art that turn'd it to Advantage.

Lady Touch. 'Tis true, it might have been my Ruin — But yonder's my Lord, I believe he's coming to find you, I'll not be seen.

SCENE II.

Maskwell, alone.

So; I durst not own my introducing my Lord, tho' it succeeded well for her; for she would have suspected a Design which I should have been puzzled to excuse. My Lord is thoughtful — I'll be so too: yet he shall know my Thoughts; or think he does —

SCENE III.

(To them) Lord Touchwood.

Mask. What have I done?

Lord Touch. Talking to himself!

Mask. 'Twas honest — and shall I be rewarded for it? No, 'twas honest, therefore I shan't; — Nay, rather therefore I ought not; for it rewards itself.

Lord Touch. Unequal'd Virtue!

(Aside.

Mask. But should it be known! Then I have lost a Friend! He was an ill Man, and I have gain'd; for half my self I lent him, and that I have recall'd; so I have serv'd my self, and what is yet better, I have serv'd a worthy Lord to whom I owe myself.

Lord Touch. Excellent Man!

(Aside.

Mask. Yet I am wretched — O there is a Secret burns within this Breast, which should it once blaze forth, would ruin all, consume my honest Character, and brand me with the Name of Villain.

Lord Touch. Ha!

Mask.

The Double-Dealer.

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Mask. Why do I love ! Yet Heav'n and my waking Conscience are my Witnesses, I never gave one working Thought a Vent ; which might discover that I lov'd, nor ever must ; no, let it prey upon my Heart, for I would rather die, than seem once, barely seem dishonest ; O should it once be known I love fair *Cynthia*, all this that I have done would look like Rival's Malice, false Friendship to my Lord, and base Self-interest. Let me perish first, and from this Hour avoid all Sight and Speech, and if I can, all Thought of that pernicious Beauty. Ha ! but what is my Distraction doing ? I am wildly talking to my self, and some ill Chance might have directed malicious Ears this Way.

(*Seems to start, seeing my Lord.*)

Lord Touch. Start not——let guilty and dishonest Souls start at the Revelation of their Thoughts, but be thou fix'd, as is thy Virtue.

Mask. I am confounded, and beg your Lordship's Pardon for those free Discourses which I have had with my self.

Lord Touch. Come, I beg your Pardon that I over-heard you, and yet it shall not need—Honest *Maskwell* ! thy and my good Genius led me hither—Mine, in that I have discover'd so much manly Virtue ; thine, in that thou shalt have due Reward of all thy Worth. Give me thy Hand—my Nephew is the alone remaining Branch of all our ancient Family ; him I thus blow away, and constitute thee in his Room to be my Heir——

Mask. Now Heav'n forbid——

Lord Touch. No more——I have resolv'd — The Writings are ready drawn, and wanted nothing but to be sign'd, and have his Name inserted——Yours will fill the Blank as well——I will have no Reply——Let me command this Time ; for 'tis the last, in which I will assume Authority——hereafter, you shall rule where I have Power.

Mask. I humbly would petition——

Lord Touch. Is't for yourself ? ——(*Mask pauses.*)
I'll hear of nought for any Body else.

Mask. Then witness Heav'n for me, his Wealth and Honour

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Mask.

Honour was not of my seeking, nor would I build my Fortune on another's Ruin : I had but one Desire—

Lord Touch. Thou shalt enjoy it—If all I'm worth in Wealth or Interest can purchase *Cynthia*, she is thine.—I'm sure Sir *Paul's* Consent will follow Fortune ; I'll quickly shew him which way that is going.

Mask. You oppress me with Bounty ; my Gratitude is weak, and shrinks beneath the Weight, and cannot rise to thank you—What, enjoy my Love ; forgive the Transports of a Blessing so unexpected, so unhop'd for, so unthought of !

Lord Touch. I will confirm it, and rejoice with thee.

S C E N E IV.

Maskwell alone.

This is prosp'rous indeed—Why let him find me out a Villain settled in Possession of a fair Estate, and full Fruition of my Love, I'll bear the Railings of a losing Gamster—but should he find me out before ! 'tis dangerous to delay—let me think—should my Lord proceed to treat openly of my Marriage with *Cynthia*, all must be discover'd, and *Mellefont* can be no longer blinded.—It must not be, nay shou'd my Lady know it—ay, then were fine Work indeed ! her Fury wou'd spare nothing, tho' she involv'd herself in Ruin. No, it must be by Stratagem—I must deceive *Mellefont* once more, and get my Lord to consent to my private Management. He comes opportunely—Now will I, in my old way, discover the whole and real Truth of the Matter to him, that he may not suspect one Word on't.

No mask like open Truth to cover Lies.

As to go naked is the best Disguise.

S C E N E V.

(*To him.*) *Mellefont.*

Mel. O *Maskwell*, what Hopes ? I am confounded in a Maze of Thoughts, each leading into one another, and all ending in Perplexity. My Uncle will not see nor hear me.

Mask. No Matter, Sir, don't trouble your Head, all's in my Power.

Mel. How ? for Heav'n's sake ?

Mask.

Mask. Little do you think that your Aunt has kept her Word, — How the Devil she wrought my Lord into this Dotage, I know not ; but he's gone to Sir Paul about my Marriage with *Cynthia*, and has appointed me his Heir.

Mel. The Devil he has ! what's to be done ?

Mask. I have it, it must be by Stratagem ; for it's in vain to make Application to him. I think I have that in my Head that cannot fail : Where's *Cynthia* ?

Mel. In the Garden.

Mask. Let us go and consult her, my Life for yours, I cheat my Lord.

SCENE VI.

Lord Touchwood, Lady Touchwood.

Lady Touch. *Maskwell* your Heir, and marry *Cynthia* !

Lord Touch. I cannot do too much, for so much Merit.

Lady Touch. But this is a Thing of too great Moment to be so suddenly resolved, Why *Cynthia* ? Why must he be marry'd ? Is there not Reward enough in raising his low Fortune, but he must mix his Blood with mine, and wed my Niece ? How know you that my Brother will consent, or she ? Nay, he himself perhaps may have Affections elsewhere.

Lord Touch. No, I am convinc'd he loves her.

Lady Touch. *Maskwell* love *Cynthia* ? impossible !

Lord Touch. I tell you he confess'd it to me.

Lady Touch. Confusion ! How's this ? (*Aside.*

Lord Touch. His Humility long stifled his Passion : And his Love of *Mellefont* would have made him still conceal it. — But by Encouragement, I wrung the Secret from him ; and know he's no way to be rewarded but in her.

I'll defer my farther Proceedings in it till you have consider'd it ; but remember how we are both indebted to him

SCENE VII.

Lady Touchwood alone.

Both indebted to him ! Yes we are both indebted to him, if you knew all. Villain ! Oh, I am wild with this Surprise of Treachery : It is impossible ; it cannot

cannot be.——He loves *Cynthia* ! What, have I been Bawd to his Designs, his Property only, a baiting Place ! Now I see what made him false to *Mellefont*.

——Shame and Distraction ! I cannot bear it. Oh ! what Woman can bear to be a Property ? To be kindled to a Flame, only to light him to another's Arms ? O that I were Fire indeed, that I might burn the vile Traytor. What shall I do ? How shall I think ? I cannot think——All my Designs are lost, my Love unfated, my Revenge unfinish'd, and fresh Cause of Fury from unthought-of Plagues.

S C E N E VIII.

(*To her*) Sir Paul Plyant.

Sir P. Madam, Sister, my Lady Sister, did you see my Lady Wife ?

Lady Touch. O ! Torture !

Sir P. Gads-bud, I can't find her high nor low ; where can she be think you ?

Lady Touch. Where she's serving you, as all your Sex ought to be serv'd ; making you a Beast. Don't you know that you're a Fool Brother ?

Sir P. A Fool ! he, he, he, you're merry—No, no, not I, I know no such Matter.

Lady Touch. Why then you don't know half your Happiness.

Sir P. That's a Jest with all my Heart, faith and troth——But hark ye, my Lord told me something of a Revolution of Things ; I don't know what to make on't——Gads-bud I must consult my Wife, he talks of disinheriting his Nephew ; and I don't know what,——Look you, Sister, I must know what my Girl has to trust to ; or not a syllable of a Wedding, Gads-bud—to shew you that I am not a Fool.

Lady Touch. Hear me, consent to the breaking off this Marriage, and the promoting any other, without consulting me, and I'll renounce all Blood, all Relation and Concern with you for ever,——Nay, I'll be your Enemy, and pursue you to Destruction, I'll tear your Eyes out, and tread you under my Feet.——

Sir P. Why, what's the Matter now ? Good Lord, why what's all this for ? Pooh, here's a Joke indeed——why, where's my Wife ?

Lady

Lady Touch. With *Careless*, in the close *Arbour*; he may want you by this Time as much as you want her.

Sir P. O, if she be with Mr. *Careless*, 'tis well enough.

Lady Touch. Fool, Sot, insensible Ox. But remember what I said to you, or you had better eat your own Horns, by this Light you had.

Sir P. Your'e a *Passionate Woman*, Gads bud,— But to say Truth, all our Family are *Cholerick*; I am the only peaceable Person amongst 'em.

SCENE IX.

Mellefont, *Maskwell*, and *Cynthia*.

Mel. I know no other way but this he has propos'd; if you have Love enough to run the Venture.

Cyn. I don't know whether I have Love enough—but I find I have *Obstinacy* enough to pursue whatever I have once resolv'd, and a true Female Courage to oppose any thing that resists my Will, tho' 'twere Reason it self.

Mask. That's right,—Well, I'll secure the Writings, and run the Hazard along with you.

Cyn. But how can the Coach and six Horses be got ready without Suspicion?

Mask. Leave it to my Care; that shall be so far from being suspected, that it shall be got ready by my Lord's own Order.

Mel. How?

Mask. Why, I intend to tell my Lord the whole Matter of our Contrivance that's my way.

Mel. I don't understand you.

Mask. Why, I'll tell my Lord, I laid this Plot with you, on purpose to betray you; and that which put me upon it, was, the finding it impossible to gain the Lady any other way, but in the Hopes of her marrying you.—

Mel. So——

Mask. So, why so, while you're busied in making your self ready, I'll wheedle her into the Coach; and instead of you, borrow my Lord's Chaplain, and so run away with her myself.

Mel. O I conceive you, you'll tell him so?

Mask.

Mask. Tell him so I say ; why you don't think I mean to do so ?

Mel. No, no ; ha, ha, I dare swear thou wilt not.

Mask. Therefore for our farther Security, I would have you disguis'd like a Parson, that if my Lord should have Curiosity to peep, he may not discover you in the Coach, but think the Cheat is carry'd on as he would have it.

Mel. Excellent *Maskwell* ! thou wert certainly meant for a Statesman or a Jesuite,——but thou art too honest for one, and too pious for the other.

Mask. Well, get your selves ready, and meet me in half an Hour, yonder in my Lady's Dressing-Room ; go by the back-stairs, and so we may slip down without being observ'd——I'll send the Chaplain to you with his Robes ; I have made him my own ;——and ordered him to meet us To-Morrow Morning at *St. Albans* ; where we will sum up this Account, to all our Satisfactions.

Mel. Should I begin to thank or praise thee, I should waste the little Time we have.

SCENE X.

Cynthia, *Maskwell*.

Mask. Madam, you will be ready ?

Cyn. I will be punctual to the Minute. (*Going.*

Mask. Stay, I have a Doubt——Upon second Thoughts, we had better meet in the Chaplain's Chamber here, the corner Chamber at this end of the Gallery, there is a back Way into it, so that you need not come through this Door——and a pair of private Stairs leading down to the Stables——It will be more convenient.

Cyn. I am guided by you, ——but *Mellefont* will mistake.

Mask. No, no, I'll after him immediately, and tell him.

Cyn. I will not fail.

SCENE XI.

Maskwell alone.

Why *qui vult decipi decipiatur*——'Tis no Fault of mine : I have told him in plain Terms, how easily 'tis for me to cheat them ; if they will not bear the Serpent's

Serpent's Hiss, they must be stung into Experience, and future Caution——Now to prepare my Lord to consent to this.——But first I must instruct my little Levite ; there is no Plot, publick or private, that can expect to prosper without one of them has a Finger in't. He promised me to be within at this Hour,—
Mr. Saygrace, Mr. Saygrace.

(Goes to the Chamber Door, and knocks,

S C E N E XII.

Maskwell, Saygrace.

Mr. Saygrace (looking out)

Sweet Sir, I will but pen the last Line of an Acrostick and be with you in the twinkling of an Ejaculation, in the pronouncing of an *Amen*, or before you can—

Mask. Nay, good Mr. Saygrace do not prolong the Time, by describing to me the Shortness of your Stay ; rather if you please, defer the finishing of your Wit, and let us talk about our Business, it shall be Tithes in your Way.

Say. (enters) You shall prevail, I would break off in the Middle of a Sermon to do you a Pleasure.

Mask. You could not do me a greater,—— except
——the Business in Hand——Have you provided a Habit for *Mellefont* ?

Say. I have, they are ready in my Chamber, together with a clean starch'd Band and Cuffs.

Mask. Good, let them be carried to him,—— have you stich'd the Gown Sleeve, that he may be puzzled, and waste time in putting it on ?

Say. I have ; the Gown will not be indued without perplexity.

Mask. Meet me in half an Hour, here in your own Chamber. When *Cynthia* comes, let there be no light, and do not speak, that she may not distinguish you from *Mellefont*. I'll urge haste, to excuse your Silence.

Say. You have no more Commands ?

Mask. None, your Text is short.

Say. But pithy, and I will handle it with Discretion.

Mask. It will be the first you have so serv'd.

S C E N E

The Double-Dealer.

S C E N E XIII.

Lord Touchwood, Maskwell.

Lord Touch. Sure I was born to be controlled by those I should command : My very Slaves will shortly give me Rules how I should govern them.

Mask. I am concern'd to see your Lordship dissatisfied.—

Lord Touch. Have you seen my Wife lately, or dissatisfied her ?

Mask. No, my Lord.—What can this mean !
(*Aside.*)

Lord Touch. Then *Mellefont* has urg'd some body to incense her—Something she has heard of you, which carries her beyond the Bounds of Patience.

Mask. This I fear'd. (*Aside.*) Did not your Lordship tell her of the Honours you design'd me ?

Lord Touch. Yes.

Mask. 'Tis that, you know my Lady has a high Spirit, she thinks I am unworthy.

Lord Touch. Unworthy ! 'tis an ignorant Pride in her to think so—Honesty to me is true Nobility. However, 'tis my Will it shall be so, and that shou'd be convincing to her as much as Reason—By Heav'n I'll not be Wife ridden ; were it possible it should be done this Night.

Mask. By Heav'n he meets my Wishes. (*Aside.*) Few things are impossible to willing Minds.

Lord Touch. Instruct me how this may be done, you shall see I want no Inclination.

Mask. I had laid a small Design for To-morrow (as Love will be inventing) which I thought to communicate to your Lordship—But it may be as well done to Night.

Lord Touch. Here's Company—Come this way and tell me.

S C E N E XIV.

Careless, and Cynthia.

Care. Is not that he, now gone out with my Lord ?
Cyn. Yes.

Care. By Heav'n there's Treachery—The Confusion that I saw your Father in, my Lady *Touchwood's* Passion,

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Passion, with what imperfectly I overheard between my Lord, and her, confirm me in my Fears. Where is *Mellifont*?

Cyn. Here he comes.

SCENE XV.

(*To them,*) *Mellefont.*

Cyn. Did *Maskwell* tell you any thing of the Chaplain's Chamber?

Mel. No; my Dear, will you get ready—the Things are all in my Chamber; I want nothing but the Habit.

Care. You are betray'd, and *Maskwell* is the Villain I always thought him.

Cyn. When you were gone, he said his Mind was chang'd, and bid me meet him in the Chaplain's Room, pretending immediately to follow you, and give you Notice.

Mel. How!

Care. There's *Saygrace* tripping by with a Bundle under his Arm—He cannot be ignorant that *Maskwell* means to use his Chamber; let's follow and examine him.

Mel. 'Tis loss of Time—I cannot think him false.

SCENE XVI.

Cynthia, Lord Touchwood.

Cyn. My Lord musing!

Lord Touch. He has a quick invention, if this were suddenly design'd—Yet he says he had prepar'd my Chaplain already.

Cyn. How's this! Now I fear indeed.

Lord Touch. *Cynthia* here alone, fair Cousin, and melancholy?

Cyn. Your Lordship was thoughtful.

Lord Touch. My Thoughts were on serious Business, not worth your hearing.

Cyn. Mine were on Treachery concerning you, and may be worth your hearing.

Lord Touch. Treachery concerning me, pray be plain—Hark! what Noise!

Mask. (*within.*) Will you not hear me?

Lady

Lady Touch. (within.) No, Monster! Traytor! No.

Cyn. My Lady and *Maskwell*! this may be lucky—My Lord, let me entreat you to stand behind this Skreen, and listen; perhaps this Chance may give you proof of what you ne'er could have believ'd from my Suspicions.

S C E N E XVII.

Lady Touchwood with a Dagger and Maskwell: Cynthia and Lord Touchwood abscond, listening.

Lady Touch. You want but leisure to invent fresh falsehood, and sooth me to a fond belief of all your Fictions; but I will stab the Lie that's forming in your Heart, and save a Sin, in pity to your Soul.

Mask. Strike then—Since you will have it so.

Lady Touch. Ha! a steady Villian to the last!

Mask. Come, why do you dally with me thus?

Lady Touch. Thy stubborn Temper shocks me, and you knew it would—this is Cunning all, and not Courage; no, I know thee well: But thou shalt miss thy Aim.

Mask. Ha, ha, ha.

Lady Touch. Ha, Do you mock my Rage? then this shall punish your fond, rash Contempt! Again smile!

(Goes to strike.)

And such a Smile as speaks an ambiguity! Ten thousand Meanings lurk in each Corner of that various Face.

O! That they were written in thy Heart, that I, with this, might lay thee open to my Sight!

But then 'twill be too late to know—

'Thau hast, thou hast found the only way to turn my Rage; Too well thou know'st my jealous Soul cou'd never bear Uncertainty. Speak then, and tell me—Yet are you silent? Oh, I am wilder'd in all Passions! But thus my Anger melts. *(Weeps.)* Here take this Ponyard, for my very Spirits faint, and I want Strength to hold it, thou hast disarm'd my Soul.

(Gives the Dagger.)

Lord Touch. Amazement shakes me—where will this end?

Mask

Mask. So, 'tis well——let your wild Fury have a Vent; and when you have Temper, tell me.

Lady Touch. Now, now, now I am calm, and can hear you.

Mask. (aside.) Thanks, my Invention; and now I have it for you——First tell me what urg'd you to this Violence? For your Passion broke in such imperfect Terms, that yet I am to learn the Cause.

Lady Touch. My Lord himself surpriz'd me with the News, you were to marry *Cynthia*——That you had own'd your Love to him, and his Indulgence would assist you to attain your Ends.

Cyn. How, my Lord!

Lord Touch. Pray forbear all Resentments for a while, and let us hear the rest.

Mask. I grant you in Appearance all is true; I seem'd consenting to my Lord; nay, transported with the Blessing——But could you think that I, who had been happy in your lov'd Embraces, could e'er be fond of an inferior Slavery?

Lord Touch. Ha! O Poison to my Ears! what do I hear.

Cyn. Nay, good my Lord, forbear Resentment, let us hear it out.

Lord Touch. Yes, I will contain, tho' I cou'd burst.

Mask. I that had wanton'd in the rich Circle of your World of Love, cou'd be confin'd within the puny Province of a Girl? No——Yet tho' I dote on each last Favour more than all the rest; tho' I would give a Limb for every Look you cheaply throw away on any other Object of your Love; yet so far I prize your Pleasures o'er my own, that all this seeming Plot that I have laid, has been to gratify your Taste, and cheat the World to prove a faithful Rogue to you.

Lady Touch. If this were true——But how can it be?

Mask. I have so contriv'd that *Mellefont* will presently, in the Chaplain's Habit, wait for *Cynthia* in your Dressing-room: But I have put the Change upon her, that she may be other-where employ'd——Do you procure her Night-gown, and with

G

your

Mask

your Hoods tied over your Face, meet him in her stead; you may go privately by the Back Stairs, and, unperceiv'd, there you may propose to reinstate him in his Uncle's Favour, if he'll comply with your Desires; his Cause is desperate, and I believe he'll yield to any Conditions. If not, here take this; you may employ it better, than in the Heart of one who is nothing when not yours.

(Gives the Dagger.)

Lady Touch. Thou can'st deceive every Body,—— Nay thou hast deceiv'd me; but 'tis as I would wish,——Trusty Villain! I could worship thee——

Mask. No more.——It wants but a few Minutes of the Time; and *Mellefont's* Love will carry him there before his hour.

Lady Touch. I go, I fly, incomparable *Maskwell*!

S C E N E XVIII.

Maskwell, Cynthia, Lord Touchwood.

Mask. So, this was a Pinch indeed; my Invention was upon the Rack, and made Discovery of her last Plot: I hope *Cynthia* and my Chaplain will be ready, I'll prepare for the Expedition.

S C E N E XIX.

Cynthia, and Lord Touchwood.

Cyn. Now, my Lord?

Lord Touch. Astonishment binds up my Rage! Villainy upon Villainy! Heav'ns, what a long Track of dark Deceit has this discover'd! I am confounded when I look back, and want a Clue to guide me thro' the various Mazes of unheard of Treachery. My Wife! Damnation! my Hell!

Cyn. My Lord, have Patience, and be sensible how great our happiness is, that this Discovery was not made too late.

Lord Touch. I thank you; yet it may be still too late, if we don't presently prevent the Execution of their Plots;——Ha! I'll do't. Where's *Mellefont*, my poor injur'd Nephew,——How shall I make him ample Satisfaction?——

Cyn. I dare answer for him.

Lord Touch. I do him fresh Wrong to question his Forgiveness; for I know him to be all Goodness,——

Yet

The Double-Dealer.

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Yet my Wife! Damn her,——She'll think to meet him in that Dressing Room —— Was't not so? And *Maskwell* will expect you in the Chaplain's Chamber,—— For once I'll add my Plot too,—— let us haste to find out, and inform my Nephew; and do you, quickly as you can, bring all the Company into this Gallery.——I'll expose the Strumpet and the Villain.

SCENE XX.

Lord Froth, and Sir Paul Plyant.

Lord Froth. By Heav'n's I have slept an Age——
Sir Paul, what a Clock is't? Past Eight, on my Conscience: My Lady's is the most inviting Couch; and a Slumber there, is the prettiest Amusement! But where's all the Company——

Sir P. The Company, gads-bud, I don't know, my Lord, but here's the strangest Revolution, all turn'd topsy turvy; as I hope for Providence.

Lord Froth. O Heav'n's what's the Matter?
Where's my Wife?

Sir P. All turn'd topsy turvy, as sure as a Gun.

Lord Froth. How do you mean? My Wife!

Sir P. The strangest Posture of Affairs!

Lord Froth. What, my Wife?

Sir P. No, no, I mean the Family.——Your Lady's Affairs may be in a very good Posture; I saw her go into the Garden with Mr. *Brisk*.

Lord Froth. How? where? when? what to do?

Sir P. I suppose they have been laying their Heads together.

Lord Froth. How?

Sir P. Nay, only about Poetry, I suppose, my Lord; making Couplets.

Lord Froth. Couplets!

Sir P. O, here they come.

SCENE XXI.

(*To them.*) *Lady Froth, Brisk.*

Brisk. My Lord, your humble Servant; *Sir Paul*, yours——the finest Night!

Lady Froth. My Dear, Mr. *Brisk* and I have been Star-gazing, I don't know how long.

The Double-Dealer.

your Hoods tied over your Face, meet him in her stead; you may go privately by the Back Stairs, and, unperceiv'd, there you may propose to reinstate him in his Uncle's Favour, if he'll comply with your Desires; his Cause is desperate, and I believe he'll yield to any Conditions. If not, here take this; you may employ it better, than in the Heart of one who is nothing when not yours.

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Lord Froth. By Heav'n's I have slept an Age —
Sir Paul, what a Clock is't? Past Eight, on my Conscience: My Lady's is the most inviting Couch; and a Slumber there, is the prettiest Amusement! But where's all the Company —

Sir P. The Company, gads-bud, I don't know, my Lord, but here's the strangest Revolution, all turn'd topsy turvy; as I hope for Providence.

Lord Froth. O Heav'n's what's the Matter? Where's my Wife?

Sir P. All turn'd topsy turvy, as sure as a Gun.

Lord Froth. How do you mean? My Wife!

Sir P. The strangest Posture of Affairs!

Lord Froth. What, my Wife?

Sir P. No, no, I mean the Family. — Your Lady's Affairs may be in a very good Posture; I saw her go into the Garden with Mr. *Brisk*.

Lord Froth. How? where? when? what to do?

Sir P. I suppose they have been laying their Heads together.

Lord Froth. How?

Sir P. Nay, only about Poetry, I suppose, my Lord; making Couplets.

Lord Froth. Couplets!

Sir P. O, here they come.

S C E N E XXI.

(*To them.*) *Lady Froth, Brisk.*

Brisk. My Lord, your humble Servant; *Sir Paul*, yours — the finest Night!

Lady Froth. My Dear, Mr. *Brisk* and I have been Star-gazing, I don't know how long.

Sir P. Does it not tire your Ladyship? are not you weary with looking up?

Lady Froth. Oh, no, I love it violently.—My Dear, you're melancholy.

Lord Froth. O, No, my dear; I'm but just awake—

Lady Froth. Snuff some of my Spirit of Harts-horn.

Lord Froth. I've some of my own, thank you, my Dear.

Lady Froth. Well I swear Mr. Brisk, you understood Astronomy like an old Egyptian.

Brisk. Not comparably to your Ladyship; you are the very Cynthia of the Skies, and Queen of Stars.

Lady Froth. That's because I have no Light, but what's by Reflection from you, who are the Sun.

Brisk. Madam, you have ecclips'd me quite, let me perish—I can't answer that.

Lady Froth. No matter, — Hark ye, shall you and I make an Almanack together?

Brisk. With all my Soul — Your Ladyship has made me the Man in't already, I'm so full of the Wounds which you have given.

Lady Froth. O finely taken! I swear now you are even with me. O Parnassus! you have an infinite deal of Wit.

Sir P. So he has, Gads-bud, and so has your Ladyship.

SCENE XXII.

(To them) Lady Plyant, Careless, Cynthia.

Lady P. You tell me most surprizing Things; bless me, who would ever trust a Man? O my Heart akes for fear they should be all deceitful alike.

Care. You need not fear, Madam; you have Charms to fix Inconstancy itself.

Lady P. O dear, you make me blush.

Lord Froth. Come, my Dear, shall we take Leave of my Lord and Lady?

Cyn. They'll wait upon your Lordship presently.

Lady Froth. Mr. Brisk, my Coach shall set you down.

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